

THE ARGOSY.

FEBRUARY 1, 1872.

WITHIN THE MAZE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRIAL.

THE unfortunate act committed by Adam Andinnian (some people said it must have been an accident) was bruited abroad far and wide. Circumstances conspired to give to it an unusual notoriety; and for more than the traditional nine days it remained a wonder in men's minds. Sir Adam's recent accession to the family honours; the utter want of adequate motive; the name of the young lady said to be mixed up with it: all this tended to arouse the public interest. That a gentleman of peaceful tendencies, an educated man and new baronet of the realm should take up his gun and shoot another in calm deliberation, was well nigh incredible. Public interest was not allowed to flag. Before a sufficient space of time had elapsed for that, the trial came on.

Sir Adam Andinnian was not fated, as too many prisoners are, to languish out months of suspense in prison. The calamity occurred towards the end of June; the assizes were held in July. Almost before his final examination by the magistrates had concluded, or the coroner's inquest (protracted after the fashion of inquests, but in this case without any sufficient reason) had returned its verdict, the summer assizes were upon the county. The magistrates had committed Sir Adam Andinnian to take his trial for wilful murder; the coroner's jury for manslaughter.

But now—what effect does the reader suppose this most awful blow must have had on Mrs. Andinnian? If any one ever deserved commiseration it was surely she. To every mother it would have been

terrible ; to her it was worse than terrible. She loved her son with the love only lavished on an idol ; she had gone forth to his new inheritance in all the pride of her fond heart, counting every day, ay, and every hour, until he should gladden it with his presence. If one mortal man stood on a pinnacle just then above all his fellows in her estimation, that man was her handsome son, the new baronet, Sir Adam Andinnian. And oh ! the desolation that fell upon her when the son for whom she cared not, Karl, arrived to break the news.

And Karl ? Hardly less keen, if any, was the blow upon him. Until then, he did not know how very warm and true was his affection for his brother. Staggering back to the town the same night after his interview with Hewitt—and it seemed to Karl Andinnian that he did stagger, under the weight of his affliction—he found the prisoner at the police station, and was allowed to see him. Adam did not appear to feel his position at all. Karl thought the passion—or whatever other ill feeling it might have been that prompted him to the fatal deed—was swaying him still. He was perfectly calm and self-possessed, and sat quite at ease while the chief of the station took down sundry reports in writing from the policemen who brought the prisoner in.

"I have done nothing that I regret," he said to Karl. "The man has but got his deserts. I should do it again to-morrow under the same provocation."

"But, Adam, think of the consequences to yourself," gasped Karl, aghast with dismay at this dangerous admission in the hearing of the officers.

"Oh, as to consequences, I shall be quite ready to take *them*," returned the prisoner, drawing himself haughtily up. "I never yet did aught that I was ashamed to acknowledge afterwards."

The Inspector ceased writing for a moment and turned round. "Sir Adam Andinnian, I'd advise you for your own sake to be silent. Least said is soonest mended, you know, sir. That's a good rule to remember in all cases."

"Very good indeed, Wall," readily assented Sir Adam—who had previously been on speaking terms with the Inspector. "But if you think I am going to try to disown what I've done, you are mistaken."

"It must have been an accident," spoke poor Karl in a low tone, almost as though he were suggesting it. "I told Hewitt so."

"Hewitt knows better : he saw me take up the gun, level it, and shoot him," was the reply of Sir Adam, asserted openly. "Look here, Wall. The fellow courted his fate ; *courted* it. I had assured him that if he dared to offend in a certain way again, I would shoot him as I'd shoot a dog. He set me at defiance and did it. Upon that, I carried out my promise, and shot him. I could not break my word, you know."

Just then a doubt crossed the Inspector's mind—as he related afterwards—that Sir Adam Andinnian was not in his right senses.

"And the mother?" breathed Karl.

"*There's* the worst of it," returned Sir Adam, his tone quickly changing to grave concern. "For her sake, I could almost regret it. You must go off to Foxwood, Karl, and break it to her."

What a task it was! Never in all Karl's life had one like unto it been imposed upon him. With the early morning he started for Foxwood: and it seemed to him that he would rather have started to his grave.

It was perhaps somewhat singular that during the short period of time intervening before the trial, Lieutenant Andinnian should have been gazetted to his company. It gave Karl no pleasure. The rise he had hoped for, that was to have brought him so much satisfaction, could but be productive of pain now. If the trial resulted in the awful sentence—Condemnation—Karl would not of course continue in the army. No, nor with any inferior result; save and except acquittal. Karl felt this. It was a matter that admitted of no alternative. To remain one amidst his fellow officers with his only brother disgraced and punished, was not to be thought of. And Karl would rather have remained the nameless lieutenant than have been gazetted captain.

The truest sympathy was felt for him, the utmost consideration evinced. Leave of absence was accorded him at his request, until the result of the trial should be known. He wanted his liberty to stand by his brother, and to make efforts for the defence. Make efforts! When the accused persisted in openly avowing he was guilty, what efforts could be made with any hope of success?

One of the hottest days that July has ever given us was that of the trial. The county town was filled from end to end: thousands of curious people had thronged in, hoping to get a place in court; or, at least, to obtain a sight of the baronet-prisoner. It was reported that but for the earnest pleadings of his mother there would have been no trial—Sir Adam would have pleaded guilty. It was whispered that she, the hitherto proud, overbearing, self-contained woman, went down on her knees to entreat him not to bring upon his head the worst and most-extreme sentence known to England's law—as the said pleading guilty would have brought—but to give himself a chance of a more lenient sentence: perhaps of an acquittal. It was said that Captain Andinnian would have taken his place in the dock to countenance and stand by his brother, but was not permitted.

The trial was unusually short and unusually interesting. Immediately after the judge had taken his seat in the morning, the prisoner was brought in. The crowded court, who had just risen to do homage to the judge, rose again amidst stir and excitement. Strangers, straining their eager eyes, saw, perhaps with a momentary feeling of surprise, as

grand a gentleman as any present. A tall, commanding, handsome man, with a frank expression of countenance when he smiled, but haughty in repose ; his white teeth, that he showed so much, and his grey eyes quite beautiful. He wore deep mourning for his uncle, Sir Joseph ; and bowed to the judge with as much stately ceremony as though he were bowing before the Queen. Captain Andinnian, in deep mourning also, sat at the table with the solicitors.

The chief witnesses, it may be said the only ones of consequence, were Thomas Hewitt the man servant, and Miss Rose Turner. A surgeon spoke to the cause of death—a shot through the heart—and a policeman or two gave some little evidence. Altogether not much. The story that came out to the world through the speeches of counsel, including those for the defence as well as for the prosecution, may be summed up as follows.

Mr. Andinnian (now Sir Adam) had a great friendship for a young lady neighbour who lived close by, with whom he and his mother had been intimate, and for whose best interests he had a lively regard. This was a Miss Rose Turner : a young lady (the counsel emphatically said) worthy of every consideration, and against whom not a breath of slight had been, or could be whispered. Some few months ago Miss Turner was introduced at a friend's house to a medical student (the deceased) named Martin Scott. It had been ascertained, from inquiries set on foot since Martin Scott's death, that this man's private pursuits and character were not at all reputable : but that was of course (the counsel candidly added) no reason why he should have been killed. In spite of Miss Turner's strong objection, Martin Scott persisted in offering her his attentions, and two or three times, to the young lady's great disgust, he had forcibly kissed her. These facts became known to Mr. Andinnian : and he, being of a hasty, passionate nature, unfortunately took up the matter warmly. Indignant that the young lady should have been subjected to anything so degrading, he sought an interview with the offender, and told him that if ever he dared to repeat the insult to Miss Turner, he, Mr. Andinnian, would shoot him. It appeared, the counsel added, that Mr. Andinnian avowed this in unmistakable terms ; that the unfortunate deceased fully understood him to mean it, and that Mr. Andinnian would certainly do what he said if provoked. Proof of which would be given. In spite of all this, Martin Scott braved his fate the instant he had an opportunity. On the fatal evening, June the twenty-third, Miss Turner having only just returned home from an absence of some weeks, Martin Scott made his appearance at her uncle's house, followed her into the garden, and there, within sight of Mr. Andinnian (or, rather, Sir Adam Andinnian, for he had then succeeded to his title, said the counsel, stopping to correct himself) he rudely took the young lady in his arms, and kissed her several times. Miss Turner, naturally startled and indignant, broke from him, and

burst into a fit of hysterical sobs. Upon this, the prisoner caught up his loaded gun and shot him dead: the gun, unhappily, lying close to his hand, for he had been shooting birds during the day. Such was the substance of the story, as told to the court.

Thomas Hewitt, the faithful serving man, who deposed that he had lived in the Andinnian family for many years, and who could hardly speak for the grief within him, was examined. Alas! he was called for the prosecution: for all his evidence told against his master, not for him.

"That evening," he said, "about eight o'clock, or from that to half past, I had occasion to see my master, Sir Adam, and went across the garden and beyond the shrubbery of trees to find him. He was standing by the gate that divides his grounds from Mr. Turner's: and all in the same moment, as I came in view, there seemed to be a scuffle going on in Mr. Turner's wide path by the rose-bushes. Just at first I did not discern who it was there, for the setting sun, then going below the horizon, shone in my face like a ball of red fire. I soon saw it was Miss Turner and Martin Scott. He seemed to be holding her against her will. She broke away from him, crying and sobbing, and ran towards my master, as if wanting him to protect her."

"Well?—go on," cried the examining counsel, for the witness had stopped. "What did you see next?"

"Sir Adam caught up his gun from the garden seat close by, where it was lying, presented it at Martin Scott, and fired. The young man sprang up into the air a foot or two, and then fell. It all passed in a moment. I ran to assist him, and found he was dead. That is all I know."

But the witness was not to be released just yet, in spite of this intimation. "Wait a bit," said the counsel for the prosecution. "You saw the prisoner take up the gun, point it at the deceased, and fire. Was all this done deliberately?"

"It was not done hurriedly, sir."

"Answer my question, witness. Was it *deliberately* done?"

"I think it was. His movements were slow. Perhaps," added poor Hewitt, willing to suggest a loophole of escape for his master, "perhaps Sir Adam had forgotten the gun was loaded, and only fired it off to frighten Scott. It was in the morning he had been shooting the birds: hours before: he could easily have forgotten that it was loaded. My master is not a cruel man, but a humane one."

"How came he to leave the gun out there for so many hours, if he had done with it?" asked the judge.

"I don't know, my lord. I suppose he forgot to bring it in when he came in to dinner. Sir Adam is naturally very careless indeed."

One of the jury spoke. "Witness, what was it that you wanted with him when you went out that evening?"

"A telegram had come for him, sir, and I went to take it to him."

"What did the telegram contain? Do you know?"

"I believe it came from Foxwood, sir."

"From Foxwood?"

"The telegram was from my mother, Mrs. Andinnian," spoke up the prisoner, in his rather loud, but perfectly calm voice, thereby electrifying the court. "It was to tell me she had arrived safely at Foxwood Court: and that the day for my uncle Sir Joseph's funeral was not then fixed."

The prisoner's solicitor, in a great commotion, leaned over and begged him in a whisper to be silent.

"Nay," said the prisoner aloud, "if any information that I can give is required, why should I be silent?" Surely there had never before been a prisoner like unto this one!

The next witness was Rose Turner. She was accompanied by her uncle and a solicitor; was dressed handsomely in black, and appeared to be in a state of extreme nervous agitation. Her face was ashy pale, her manner shrinkingly reluctant, and her voice was so low that its accents could not always be caught. In the simple matter of giving her name, she had to be asked it three times. Her evidence told little more than had been told by the opening counsel.

Mr. Scott had persecuted her with his attentions, she said. He wanted her to promise to marry him when he should be established in practice, but she wholly refused, and she begged him to go about his business and leave her alone. He would not; and her aunt had rather encouraged Mr. Scott: they did not know what kind of private character he bore, but supposed of course it was good. Martin Scott had twice kissed her against her will, very much to her own annoyance; she had told Mr. Andinnian of it—who had always been very kind to her, quite like a protector. It made Mr. Andinnian very angry: and he had then threatened Martin Scott that if he ever again attempted to molest her, he would shoot him. She was sure that Martin Scott understood that Mr. Andinnian was not joking, but meant to do what he said. So far, the witness spoke with tolerable readiness: but after this not a word would she say that was not drawn from her.

"You went out on a visit in May: where was it to?" questioned the counsel.

"Birmingham."

"How long did you stay there?"

"I was away from home five weeks altogether."

"When did you return home?—You must speak a little louder, if you please."

"On the evening of the twenty-second of June."

"That was the day before the murder?"

"It was not a murder," returned the witness, with emotion. "Sir Adam Andinnian was quite justified in what he did."

The judge interposed. "You are not here to state opinions, young lady, but to answer questions." The counsel resumed.

"Did the deceased, Martin Scott, come to your uncle's residence on the evening of the twenty-third?"

"Yes. My uncle was at home, ill, that evening, and he kept Mr. Scott in conversation, so that he had no opportunity of teasing me."

"You went, later, into the garden?"

"Yes. Martin Scott must have seen me pass the window, for I found he was following me out. I saw Sir Adam standing at his gate and went towards him."

"With what motive did you go?"

A pause. "I intended to tell him that Scott was there."

"Had you seen Sir Adam at all since the previous evening?"

Whether the young lady said Yes or No to this question could not be told. Her answer was inaudible.

"Now this won't do," cried the counsel, losing patience. "You must speak so that the jury can hear you, witness; and you must please lift your head. What have you to be ashamed of?"

At this sting, a bright flush dyed the young lady's pale cheeks: but she evidently did not think of resisting. Lifting her face, she spoke somewhat louder.

"I had seen Sir Adam in the morning when he was shooting the birds. I saw him again in the afternoon, and was talking with him for a few minutes. Not for long: some friends called on my aunt, and she sent for me in."

"Was anything said about Martin Scott that day, between you and Sir Adam?"

"Not a word. We did not so much as think of him."

"Why, then, were you hastening in the evening to tell Sir Adam that Scott was there?"

The witness hesitated and burst into tears. Her answer was impeded by sobs.

"Of course it was a dreadful thing for me to do—as things have turned out. I had no ill thought in it. I was only going to tell him that Scott had come and was sitting with my uncle. There was nothing in that to make Sir Adam angry."

"You have not replied to my question. *Why* did you hasten to tell Sir Adam?"

"There was no very particular cause. Before I left home in May, I had hoped Mr. Scott had ceased his visits: when I found, by his coming this evening, that he had not, I thought I would tell Sir Adam. We both disliked Martin Scott from his rudeness to me. I began to feel afraid of him again."

"Afraid of what?"

"Lest he should be rude to me as he had been before."

"Allow me to ask—in a case of this sort, would it not have been your uncle's place to deal with Mr. Scott, rather than Sir Adam Andinnian's?"

The witness bent her head, and sobbed. While the prisoner, without affording her time for any answer, again spoke up.

"When Martin Scott insulted Miss Turner before, I had particularly requested her to inform me at once if he ever attempted such a thing again. I also requested her to let me know of it if he resumed his visits at her uncle's house. I wished to protect Miss Turner as efficiently as I would have protected a sister."

The prisoner was ordered to be silent. Miss Turner's examination went on.

"You went out on this evening to speak to the prisoner, and Martin Scott followed you. What next?"

"Martin Scott caught me up when I was close to the bed of rose bushes: that is, about half way between the house and the gate where Sir Adam was standing. He began reproaching me; saying I had not given him a word of welcome after my long absence and did I think he was going to stand it. Before—before—"

"Before what? Why do you hesitate?"

The witness's tears burst forth afresh: her voice was pitiable in its distress. A thrill of sympathy moved the whole court; not one in it but felt for her.

"Before I was aware, Martin Scott had caught me in his arms, and was kissing my face. I struggled to get away from him, and ran towards Sir Adam Andinnian for shelter. It was then he took up his gun."

"What did Sir Adam say?"

"Nothing. He put me behind him with one hand, and fired. I recollect seeing Hewitt standing beside me then, and for a few moments I recollected no more. At first I did not know any harm was done: only when I saw Hewitt kneeling down in the path over Martin Scott."

"What did the prisoner do then?"

"He put the gun back on the seat again, quite quietly, and walked down the path towards where they were. My uncle and aunt came running out, and—and that ended it."

With a burst of grief that threatened to become hysterical, she covered her face. Perhaps in compassion, only two or three further questions of unimportance were asked her. She had told all she knew of the calamity, she said; and was allowed to retire: leaving the audience most favourably impressed with the pretty looks, the innocence, and the modesty of Miss Rose Turner.

A young man named Wharton was called; an assistant to a chemist, and a friend of the late Martin Scott. He deposed to hearing Scott

speaking in the spring—he thought it was towards the end of April—of Mr. Andinnian's threat to shoot him. The witness added that he was sure Martin Scott took the threat as a serious one, and knew that Mr. Andinnian meant it as such : though it was possible that with the lapse of weeks the impression might have worn away in Scott's mind. He was the last witness called on either side ; and the two leading counsel then addressed the jury.

The judge summed up carefully and dispassionately, but not favourably. As many said afterwards, he was "dead against the prisoner." The jury remained in deliberation fifteen minutes only, and then came back with their verdict.

Wilful murder : but with a very strong recommendation to mercy.

The judge then asked the prisoner if he had anything to urge against the sentence of Death that was about to be passed upon him.

Nothing but this, the prisoner replied, speaking courteously and quietly. That he believed he had done only his duty : and that Martin Scott had deliberately and defiantly rushed upon his own fate : and that if young, innocent, and refined ladies were to be insulted by reprobate men with impunity, the sooner the country went back to a state of barbarism the better. To this the judge replied, that if for trifling causes men might with impunity murder others in cold blood, the country would be already in a state of barbarism, without going back to it.

But the trial was not to conclude without one startling element of sensation. The judge had put the black cap on his head, when a tall, proud-looking, handsome lady stepped forward and demanded to say a word in stay of the sentence. It was Mrs. Andinnian. Waving the ushers away who would have removed her, she was, perhaps in very astonishment, allowed to speak.

Her son had inherited an uncontrollable temper, she said ; *her* temper. If anything occurred greatly to exasperate him (but this was very rare) his transitory passion was akin to madness. In fact it was madness for the short time it lasted, which was never more than for a few moments. To punish him by death for any act committed by him during this irresponsible time would be, she urged, murder. Murder upon him.

Only these few words did she speak. Not passionately ; calmly and respectfully ; and with her dark eyes fixed on the judge. She then bowed to the judge, and retired. The judge inclined his head gravely to her in return, and proceeded with his sentence.

Death. But the strong recommendation of the jury should be forwarded to the proper quarter.

The judge, as was learnt later, seconded this recommendation warmly : in fact, the words he used in passing sentence as good as conveyed an intimation that there might be no execution.

Thus ended the famous trial. Within a week afterwards the fiat was

known : and the sentence was commuted into penal servitude for life.

Penal servitude for life ! Think of the awful blight to a man in the flower of his age and in the position of Adam Andinnian ! And all through one moment's mad act !

CHAPTER V.

UNABLE TO GET STRONG.

IN an invalid's chair by the side of a fire, reclined Lucy Cleeve. Her face was delicate and thin; her sweet brown eyes had almost an anxious look in them; the white wrapper she wore was not whiter than her cheeks. Mrs. Cleeve was in the opposite chair, reading. At the window sat Miss Blake, working some colours of bright silks on a white satin ground.

As Mrs. Cleeve turned the page, she chanced to look up, and saw in her daughter a symptom of shivering.

"Lucy ! My darling, surely you are not shivering again !"

"N—o, I think not," was the hesitating answer. "The fire is getting dull, mamma."

Mrs. Cleeve stirred the fire into brightness, and then brought a warm shawl of chenille silk, and folded it over Lucy's shoulders. Chenille shawls and fires in summer ! For the August sun was shining on the world, and the blue skies were dark with their purple heat.

The cruel pain that the separation from Karl Andinnian had brought to Lucy, was worse than any one thought for. She was perfectly silent over it, bearing all patiently, and so gave no sign of the desolation within. Colonel and Mrs. Cleeve said in private how reasonable Lucy was, and how well she was forgetting the young man. Miss Blake felt sure that she had never really cared for him : that the love had been all child's play. Lucy went about wherever they chose to take her : to flower-shows, and promenades, and dances, and picnics. She talked and laughed in society as others did ; and no mortal wizard or witch could have divined she was suffering from the effects of a love-fever, that had been too rudely checked.

Very shortly she was to suffer from a different fever : one that sometimes proves to be just as difficult of cure. In spite of the gaiety and the going out, Lucy had seemed to be somewhat ailing : her appetite failed, and she grew to feel tired at nothing. In July these symptoms had increased, and she was palpably ill. The medical man called in, pronounced Miss Cleeve to be suffering from a slight fever, combined with threatenings of ague. The slight fever grew into a greater one, and then became intermittent. Intervals of shivering coldness would be succeeded by intervals of burning heat ; and they in their turn by intense prostration. The doctor said Miss Cleeve must have taken cold ; probably, he thought, had sat on damp grass at some picnic.

Lucy was very obedient. She lay in bed when they told her and got up when they told her, and took all the medicine ordered without a word, and tried to take the food. The doctor, at length, with much self-gratulation, declared the fever at an end: and that Miss Cleeve might come out of her bed-room for some hours in the day. Miss Cleeve did so come: but somehow she did not gain strength, or improve as she ought to have done. Seasons of chilling coldness would be upon her still; the white cheeks would sometimes be bright with a very suspicious looking dash of hectic. It would take time to re-establish her, said the doctor with a sigh: and that was the best he could make of it.

Whether Colonel and Mrs. Cleeve would have chosen to speak much before their daughter of the lover she had been obliged to resign, cannot be said. Most probably not. But circumstances over which they had no control led to its being done. When, towards the close of June, the news of that strange tragedy enacted by Adam Andinnian broke upon the world, all the world was full of it. Not a visitor, calling to see them, but went over the marvellous wonders of the tale in Lucy's hearing, and, as it seemed to her, for her own special benefit. The entirely unprovoked (as was at first said and supposed) nature of the crime; the singular fact that it should have been committed the very day of his assuming his rank amidst the boronetage of the kingdom; the departure of Mrs. Andinnian on the journey that he ought to have taken, and the miserable thought, so full of poignancy to the Andinnian family, that if *he* had gone, the calamity could not have happened; the summons to the young lieutenant at Winchester, his difficulty with the telegram, and his arrival at night to find what had happened at the desolate house! All these facts, and very many more details, some true, some untrue, were brought before Lucy day after day. To escape them was impossible unless she had shut herself up from society, for men and women's mouths were full of them; and none had the least suspicion that the name of Andinnian was more than any other name to Lucy Cleeve. It was subsequent to this, you of course understand, that she became ill. During this period, she was only somewhat ailing, and was going about just as other people went.

The subject—it has been already said—did not die out quickly. Before it was allowed to do so, there came the trial; and *that* and its proceedings kept it alive for many a day more. But that the matter altogether bore an unusual interest, and that a great deal of what is called romance encompassed it, by which public imagination is fed, was undeniable. The step in rank attained by Lieutenant Andinnian, his captaincy, was discussed and re-discussed as though no man had ever taken it before. So that, long ere the period now arrived at, August, Colonel and Mrs. Cleeve talked of it before their daughter with as little thought of reticence as they would have given to the most common

question of every-day life, and perhaps had nearly forgotten that there had ever been a cause why they should observe it.

A word of Miss Blake. That the perfidy—she looked upon it as such—of Lieutenant Andinnian in regard to herself, was a very bitter blow and tried her heart nearly as it was trying Lucy's, may at once be admitted. Nothing, in the world or out of it, would have persuaded her that the young man did not at an early period love her, that he would have ultimately married her but for the stepping in between them of Lucy Cleeve : and there lay a very angry and bitter feeling against Lucy at the bottom of her heart. Not against Mr. Andinnian. The first shock over, she quite exonerated him, and threw all the weight of blame on Lucy. Is it not ever so—that woman, in a case of rivalry such as this, detests and misjudges the woman, and exempts the man ?

But Miss Blake had a very strict conscience. In one of more gentle and tender nature, this would have been an admirable thing ; in her, whose nature was exceptionally hard, it might cause her to grow into something undesirably stern. There was a chance for her yet. Underlying her every thought, word, action, her witty sallies in the ball-room, her prayers in church, remained ever the one faint hope—that Karl Andinnian would recover his senses and return to his first allegiance. If this ever came to pass, and she became Mrs. Andinnian, the little kindness existing in Theresa Blake's nature would assert itself.

With this strict conscience, Miss Blake could not encourage her ill-feeling towards Lucy. On the contrary, she put it resolutely from her, and strove to go on her way in a duteous course of life and take up her own sorrow as a kind of appointed cross. All very well, this, so far as it went : but there was one dreadful want ever making itself heard—the want to fill the aching void in her lonely heart. After a disappointment to the affections, all women feel this need ; and none, unless they have felt it, can know or imagine the intense need of it. When the heart has been filled to the brim with a beloved object, every hour of the day gladdened with his sight, every dream of the night rejoicing with the thought of the morning's renewed meeting, and he is compulsorily snatched away for ever, the awful blank left is almost worse than death. Every aim, and end, and hope in life has died suddenly out, leaving only a vacuum : a vacuum that tells of nothing but pain. But for finding some object which the mind can take up and concentrate itself upon, there are women who would go mad. Miss Blake found hers in religion.

Close upon that night when you saw Mr. Andinnian and Lucy Cleeve pacing together the garden of the Reverend Mr. Blake's rectory, Mr. Blake was seized with a fit. The attack was not in itself very formidable, but it bore threatening symptoms for the future. Perfect rest was enjoined by his medical attendants, together with absence from

the scene of his labours. As soon, therefore, as he could be moved, Mr. Blake departed ; leaving his church in the charge of his many-years curate, and of a younger man who was hastily engaged to assist him. This last was a stranger in the place, the Reverend Guy Cattacomb. Now, singular to say, but it was the fact, immediately after Mr. Blake's departure, the old curate was incapacitated by an attack of very serious illness, and he also had to go away for rest and change. This left the church wholly in the hands of the new man, Mr. Cattacomb. And this most zealous but rather mistaken divine, at once set about introducing various changes in the service ; asking nobody's permission, or saying with your leave, or by your leave.

The service had hitherto been conducted reverently, plainly, and with thorough efficiency. The singing was good ; the singers—men and boys—wore white surplices : in short, all things were done decently and in order : and both Mr. Blake and his curate were excellent preachers. To the exceeding astonishment of the congregation, Mr. Cattacomb swooped down upon them the very first Sunday he was left to himself, with what they were pleased to term "vagaries." Vagaries they undoubtedly were, and not only needless ones, but such as were calculated to bring a wholesome and sound Protestant church into disrepute. The congregation remonstrated, but the Reverend Guy persisted. The power, for the time being, lay in his hands, and he used it after his own heart.

The progress of events need not be traced. It is enough to say that the Reverend Mr. Cattacomb—whose preaching was no better than the rest of him : a quarter of an hour's rant, of which nobody could make any sense at all—emptied the church. Nearly all the old congregation left it. In their places a sprinkling of young people began to frequent it. We have had examples of these things. The Reverend Guy led, and his flock (almost the whole of them ardent young girls of no experience) followed. There were banners and processions, and images of saints and angels, and candlesticks and scrolls and artificial flowers, and thrown-up incense, and soft mutterings coming from nowhere, and all kinds of odd services at all kinds of hours, and risings-up and sittings-down, and bowings here and bowings there, and private confessions and public absolutions. Whether the church was meant to be Roman Catholic or Protestant no living soul could tell. It was ultra-foolish—that is really the only name for it—and created some scandal. People took to speak of it slightly and disrespectfully as "Mr. Cattacomb and his tail." The tail being the ardent young ladies who were never away from his heels.

Never a one amidst them more ardent than Miss Blake. In the Rev. Guy and his ceremonies she found that out-let for the superfluous resources of her heart that Karl Andinnian had left so vacant. Ten times a day, if the church had ten services, or scraps of services, was

Miss Blake to be seen in the knot of worshippers. At early morning she went to Mattins; at sunset she went to Vespers. Once a week she was penned up in a close box with the Reverend Guy, at confessional. Some ladies chose the Reverend Mr. Cattacomb as their father-priest in this respect; some, his friend and coadjutor the Reverend Damon Puff: a very zealous young man also, whom the former had appointed to his assistance. Miss Blake did not neglect the claims of society in her new call to devotion; so that, what with the world and what with the church, she had but little spare time on her hands. It was somewhat unusual to see her, as now, seated quietly at her needle. The work was some beauteous silken embroidery, destined to cover a cushion for Mr. Cattacomb's reverend knees to kneel upon when at his private devotions. The needle came to a sudden pause.

"I wonder if I am wrong?" she exclaimed, after regarding attentively the leaf that had been growing under her hands. "Mrs. Cleeve, do you think the leaves to this rose should be *brown*? I fancy they ought to be green."

"Do not ask me anything about it, Theresa."

Mrs. Cleeve's answer wore rather a resentful accent. The fact was, both herself and Colonel Cleeve were vexed at Miss Blake's wholesale goings-in for the comprehensive proceedings of Mr. Cattacomb. They had resigned their pew in the church themselves, and now walked regularly to the beautiful services in the cathedral. Colonel Cleeve remonstrated with Miss Blake for what he called her folly. He told her that she was making herself ridiculous; and that these ultra innovations could but tend to bring religion itself into disrepute. It will therefore be understood that Mrs. Cleeve, knowing what the embroidery was destined for, did not regard it with approbation.

"Theresa, if I thought my dear child here, Lucy, would ever make the spectacle of herself that you and those other girls are doing, I should weep with sorrow and shame."

"Well I'm sure!" cried Miss Blake. "Spectacle!"

"What else is it? To see a parcel of brainless girls running after Guy Cattacomb and that other one — Puff? Their mothers ought to know better than to allow it. God's pure and reverent and holy worship is one thing; this is quite another."

Lucy asked for some of the cooling drink that stood near: her mouth felt always parched. As her mother brought it to her, Lucy pressed her hand and looked up in her face with a smile. Mrs. Cleeve knew that it was as much as to say "There is no fear of *me*."

Colonel Cleeve came in as the glass was being put down. He looked somewhat anxiously at his daughter: he was beginning to be uneasy that she did not gain strength more quickly.

"How do you feel now, my dear?"

"Only a little cold, papa."

"Dear me—and it is a very hot day!" remarked the colonel, wiping his brows, for he had been walking fast.

"Is there any news stirring in the town?" asked Mrs. Cleeve.

"Nothing particular. Captain Andinnian has sold out. He could not do anything else under the circumstances."

"It is a dreadful blight upon the young man's career!" spoke Mrs. Cleeve.

"There was no help for it, Lucinda. Had he been a general he must have done the same. A man who has a brother working in chains, cannot remain an officer in the Queen's service. Had the brother been hanged, I think the Commander-in-chief would have been justified in cashiering Captain Andinnian," added the colonel, who was very jealous of his Order.

Miss Blake turned with a flush of emotion. This news fell on her heart like lead. Her first thought had been—If he has left the army, there will be nothing to bring him again to Winchester.

"Captain Andinnian cannot be held responsible for what his brother did," she said.

"Of course not, Theresa."

"Neither ought it to be visited upon him."

"The worst of these sad things, you see, Theresa, is, that they *are* visited upon the relatives: and there's no hindering it. Captain Andinnian must go through life henceforth as a marked man; in a degree as a banned one: liable to be pointed at by every stranger as a man who has a brother a convict."

"Will Sir Adam be sent to Australia?" asked Mrs. Cleeve.

"No. To Portland Island. It is said he is already there."

"I wonder what will become of his money? His estate, and that?"

"Report runs that he made it all over to his mother before the trial. I don't know how far that may be true. Well, it is a thousand pities for Captain Andinnian," summed up the colonel: "he was a very nice young fellow."

They might have thought Lucy, sitting there with her face covered, was asleep, she was so still. Colonel and Mrs. Cleeve were called away to receive some visitors; and Miss Blake began folding her silks and white satin in tissue paper, for the hour of some service or other was at hand. Halting for a moment at the fire to shake the ends of silk from her gown into the hearth, she glanced at Lucy.

"Suppose you had been married to Karl Andinnian, Lucy!"

"Well?"

"What an awful fate it would have been for you!"

"I should only have clung to him the closer, Theresa," was the low answer. And it must be premised that neither Lucy nor any one else had the slightest notion of Miss Blake's regard for Karl.

Miss Blake glanced at her watch. She had two minutes yet. She turned and stood before Lucy.

"You—you do not mean to imply that you would marry Captain Andinnian now!"

"I would, Theresa. My father and mother permitting."

"You unhappy girl! Where's your pride?"

"I did not say I was going to do it, Theresa. You put an imaginary proposition; one that is altogether impossible, and I replied to *that*. I do not expect ever to see Karl Andinnian again in this world."

Something in the despairing accent touched Miss Blake, in spite of her wild jealousy. "You seem very poorly to day, Lucy," she gently said. "Are you in pain?"

"No," replied Lucy, with a sigh: "not in pain. But I don't seem to get much better, do I, Theresa? I wish I could, for papa and mamma's sake."

CHAPTER VI.

AN ATMOSPHERE OF MYSTERY.

It seemed to Mrs. Andinnian and to her son, Karl, that trouble like unto theirs had never yet fallen upon man. Loving Adam as they did, for his sake it was more than they knew how to bear. The disgrace and blight to themselves were terrible; to Karl especially, who was, so to say, only entering on life. There are some calamities that can never be righted in this world; no, nor scarcely softened. This was one. Calamities when we can only *bear*, and look forward to and live on for the next world, where no pain will be. In Karl's mind this was ever present.

The bare fact of the selling-out was to Karl Andinnian a bitter blow. He was attached to his profession: and he had been looking forward to finding, in the active discharge of its duties, a relief from the blank left by the loss of Lucy Cleeve. Now he must be thrown utterly upon himself; an idle man. Everyone was very kind to him; from the Commander-in-chief, with whom he had an interview, downwards; evincing for him the truest respect and sympathy: but not one of them said, "Won't you reconsider your determination and remain with us?" His Royal Highness civilly expressed regret at the loss Her Majesty would sustain in a good servant; but he took the withdrawal as a matter that admitted of no question. There could be none. Captain Andinnian's only brother, escaping the gallows by an accorded favour, was working in chains on Portland Island: clearly the captain, brave and unsullied man though he individually was, could but hasten to hide his head in private life.

It was a happy thing for Karl that he had plenty of business on his hands just now. It saved him in a degree from thought. Besides his own matters, there were many things to see to for his mother. The

house in Northamptonshire was given up, its furniture sold, its household, except Hewitt, discharged. Karl was on the spot, and saw to it all. Whilst there, he had rather a struggle with himself. His natural kindness of feeling prompted him to call and see Miss Turner: personally he shrunk from it, for he could not forget that it was through her all the misery had happened. He did violence to his inclination, and called. The young lady seemed to be in very depressed spirits, and said but little. During the interval that had elapsed since the trial, her uncle, to whom she was much attached, had died. She told Karl that her aunt, Mrs. Turner, intended to remove at once to her native place, a remote district of Cumberland: Rose supposed she should have to remove with her. Mr. Turner had left a very fair amount of property. His wife was to receive the interest of it for her life; at her death the whole of it would come to Rose. As Karl shook hands with her on leaving, and wished her well, something he said was taken by her as alluding to the unhappy tragedy, though he had intended nothing of the sort. It had a strange effect upon her. She rose from her seat, her hands trembling; her face became burning red, then changed to a ghastly whiteness. "Don't speak of it, Captain Andinnian," she exclaimed in a voice of horror; "don't hint at it, unless you would see me go mad. There are times when I think that madness will be my ending." Again wishing her well, he took his departure. It was rather unlikely, he thought, that their paths would cross each other again in life.

Hewitt was sent to Foxwood. It would probably be made the future home of Mrs. Andinnian and her younger son: but at present they had not gone there. For some little time, while Karl was busy in London, Northamptonshire, or elsewhere, he had lost sight of his mother. She quitted the temporary home she occupied, and, so to say, disappeared. While he was wondering what this meant, and where she could be, he received a letter from her dated Weymouth. She told him she had taken up her abode there for the present, and she charged him not to disclose this to any one, or to let her address be known. Just for a moment Karl was puzzled to imagine what her motive could be in going to a place that she knew nothing of. All at once the truth flashed upon him—she would be as near as possible to that cruel prison that contained her ill-fated son.

It was even so. Adam Andinnian was on Portland Island; and his mother had taken up her residence at Weymouth to be near him. Karl, who knew not the place, or the rules observed, wondered whether a spectator might stroll about on the (so-called) island at will, or ever get a chance glimpse of the gangs at their labour.

In the month of October, Captain Andinnian—to call him by this title for a short while longer—went to Weymouth. He found his mother established in a small, mean, ready-furnished house in an ob-

scure part of the town. It was necessary for him to see her on matters connected with the Foxwood estate, of which he had now the management; but she had charged him to come to her in as private a manner as he well could, and not to make himself or his name known at the station or elsewhere, unless under necessity. "She is right," thought Karl; "the name of Andinnian is notorious now."

"But my dear mother, why are you *here*?" he asked within five minutes of his entrance, as he looked at the confined walls of the mean abode. "You might at least have been more comfortably and suitably lodged."

"What I choose to do, I do," she answered, in the distant tones of former days. "It is not for you to question me."

Mrs. Andinnian was altered. Mental suffering had told upon her. The once fresh hues of her complexion had given place to a fixed pallor; the large dark eyes had acquired a fierce and yet restless look. In manner alone was she unaltered: and as to her pride, it seemed to be more dominant than ever.

"I was only thinking of your comfort, mother," he replied to her fierce rejoinder. "This is so different from what you have been accustomed to."

"Circumstances are different," she said curtly.

"Have you but one servant in the whole house? For everything?"

"She is enough for me: she is a faithful woman. I tell you that circumstances are not what they were."

"Some are not—unhappily," he answered. "But others, pecuniary ones, have changed the other way. You are rich now."

"And do you think I would touch a stiver of the riches that are my dear Adam's?" she retorted, her eyes blazing. "Save what may be necessary to keep up Foxwood, and to—to—. No," she resumed, after the abrupt breaking off, "I hoard them for him."

Karl wondered whether trouble had a little touched her brain. Poor Adam could have no further use for riches in this world. Unless, indeed, in years to come, he should obtain what was called a ticket of leave. But he fancied in a case like Adam's—Condemnation commuted—it was never given.

Mrs. Andinnian began asking the details of the giving-up of her former home. In answering, Karl happened to mention incidentally the death of their neighbour, Mr. Turner, and his interview with Rose. The latter's name excited Mrs. Andinnian beyond all precedent: it brought on one of those frightful fits of passion that Karl had not seen of late years.

"I loathe her," she wildly said. "But for her wicked machinations, my darling son had not fallen into this dreadful fate that's worse than death. May my worst curses light upon the head of Rose Turner!"

Karl did what he could to soothe the storm he had unwittingly

evoked. He told his mother that she would never, in all probability, be grieved with the sight of the girl again, for she was removing to the out-of-the-world district of Cumberland.

The one servant, alluded to by Karl, was a silent-mannered, capable woman of some forty years. Her mistress called her "Ann," but Karl found she was a Mrs. Hopley, a married woman. That she appeared to be really attached to her mistress, to sympathize with her in her great misfortune, and to be solicitous to render her every little service that could soothe her, Captain Andinnian saw and felt grateful for.

"Where is your husband?" he one day inquired.

"Hopley's out getting his living, sir," was the answer. "We have had misfortunes, sir: and when they come to people such as us, we must do the best we can to meet them. Hopley's working on his side, and me on mine."

"He is not in Weymouth then?"

"No, he is not in Weymouth. We are not Weymouth people, sir. I don't know much about the place. I never lived at it till I came to Mrs. Andinnian."

By this, Karl presumed that his mother had brought Mrs. Hopley with her when she came herself: but he asked no further. It somewhat explained what he had rather wondered at—that his mother, usually so reticent, and more than ever so now, should have disclosed their great calamity to this woman. He thought the servant must have been already cognisant of it.

"What misfortune was it of your own that you allude to?" he gently asked.

"It was connected with our son, sir. We never had but him. He turned out wild. While he was quite a lad, so to say, he ruined us and I had to break up the home."

"And where is he now?"

She put her check apron up to her face to hide the emotion there. "He is dead," was the low answer. "He died a dreadful death, sir, and I can't yet bear to talk of it. It's hardly three months ago."

Karl looked at the black ribbon in her cap, at the neat gown of black-and-white print she did her work in: and his heart went out to the women's sorrow. He understood better now—she and her mistress had a grief in common.

But, as the days went on, Karl Andinnian could not help remarking that there was an atmosphere of strangeness pervading the house: he could almost have said of mystery. Frequently were mistress and maid closeted together in close conference; the door locked upon them, the conversation carried on in whispers. Twice he saw Ann Hopley go out so be-cloaked and be-large-bonneted that it almost looked as though she were doing it for disguise. Karl thought it very strange.

One evening when he was reading to his mother by candle-light, the

front door was softly knocked at, and some one was admitted to the kitchen. In the small house, all sounds were plainly heard. A minute or two, and Ann came in to say a visitor wished to speak to her mistress. While Karl was wondering at this—for his mother was entirely unknown in the place—Mrs. Andinnian rose without the least surprise, looked at her son, and hesitated.

"Will you step into another room, Karl. My interview must be private."

So! she had expected this visit. Captain Andinnian went into his bed-room. He saw—for his curiosity was excited, and he did not quite close the door—he saw a tall, big, burly man, much wrapped up, and who kept his hat on, walk up the passage to the sitting-room, lighted thither by Ann. It seemed to the captain as though the visitor wished not to be seen. The interview lasted about twenty minutes. Ann then showed the man out again, and Karl returned to the parlour.

"Who was it, mother?"

"A person to see me on private business," replied Mrs. Andinnian, in a voice that effectually checked further inquiries.

The days passed monotonously. Mrs. Andinnian was generally buried in her own thoughts, scarcely ever speaking to him. "If she would but make a true son of me and give me her confidence!" Karl often thought. But, to do anything of the kind was evidently not the purport of Mrs. Andinnian.

He one day went over to Portland Island. The wish to make the pilgrimage and see what the place was like had been in his mind from the first: but, in the midst of the wish, a dreadful distaste to it drew him back, and he had let the time elapse without going. October was in its third week, and the days were getting wintry.

It is a dreary spot—and it struck with a strange dreariness on Captain Andinnian's spirit. Storms, that seem to fall lightly on other places, rage out their fury there. Half a gale was blowing that day, and he seemed to feel its roughness to the depth of his heart. The prospect around, with its heaving sea, romantic enough at some times, was all too wild to-day; the Race of Portland, that turbulent place which cannot be crossed by vessel, gave him a fit of the shivers. As to the few houses he saw, they were as poor as the one inhabited by his mother.

In one of the quarries, amidst its great masses of stone, stood Captain Andinnian, his eyes fixed on the foaming sea, his thoughts most bitter. Within a few yards of him, so to say, worked his unfortunate brother; chained, a felon; all his hopes in this world blighted; all his comforts in life gone out for ever. Karl himself was peculiarly susceptible to physical discomfort, as sensitive-natured men are apt to be; and he never thought without a shudder of what Adam had to undergo in this respect.

"Subjected to endless toil; to cruel deprivation; to isolation from all his kind!" groaned Karl aloud. "Oh, my brother, if——"

His voice died away in very astonishment. Emerging from behind one of the blocks, at right angles with him, came two people walking side by side, and evidently conversing in close whispers. In the cloaked-up woman, with the large black bonnet and black crape veil over her face, Karl was sure he saw their servant, Ann Hopley. The other must be, he thought, one of the warders: and, unless Karl was greatly mistaken, he recognized in his big, burly frame the same man who had come a night or two before to his mother's house. They passed on without seeing him, but he saw the man's face distinctly.

A light dawned on his mind. His mother was striving to make a friend of this warder; with a view of conveying messages, perhaps also it might be, physical comforts, to Adam. But why need she have hidden it from him, Karl?

When he got home that night, for he stayed out until he was tired and weary, Ann Hopley, in her usual home attire, was putting the tea-tray on the table.

"I fancied I saw Ann out to-day," he observed to his mother when they were alone.

"She went out on an errand for me," replied Mrs. Andinnian.

"I have been over to the Island," continued Karl. "It was there I thought I saw her."

Mrs. Andinnian was pouring some cream into the tea-cups when he spoke. She put down the frail glass jug with a force that smashed it, and the cream ran over the tea-board.

"You have been to the Island!" she cried, in a voice that betrayed some dreadful terror. "To the *Island*? How dared you go?"

Karl was rising to see what he could do towards repairing the mischief. The words arrested him. He had again been so unlucky as to raise one of her storms of passion: but this time he could see no reason in her anger.

"To-day is the first time I have been to the Island, mother. But I am thinking of going again. And of getting—if it be possible to obtain permission—to see *him*."

A livid colour spread itself over Mrs. Andinnian's face. "*I forbid it, Karl*. I forbid it, do you hear? You would ruin everything. forbid you to go again on the Island, or to attempt to see Adam. Good heavens! you might be recognized for his brother."

"And if I were?" cried Karl, feeling completely at sea.

Mrs. Andinnian sat with her two hands on the edge of the tea-tray, staring at him.

"Karl, you must go away to-morrow. To think you could be such a fool as to go *there*! This is worse than all. To-morrow you leave."

"Mother, why will you not place trust in me? Do you think you could have a truer confidant?—or Adam a warmer friend? I guess the object of Ann's visits to the Island. I saw her talking with one of the warders to-day—the same man, or I fancied it, that came here the other night. That moment solved me the riddle: and——"

"Hush—sh—sh—sh!" breathed Mrs. Andinnian in a terrified tone, ringing the bell, and looking round the walls of the room as if in dread that they had ears. "Not another word, Karl: I won't hear it."

"As you please, mother," he rejoined, feeling bitterly hurt at her lack of trust.

"Have you more cream in the house, Ann?" said Mrs. Andinnian calmly, when the woman appeared. "And you had better change the tray."

The meal was concluded in silence. Karl took up a newspaper he had brought in; Mrs. Andinnian sat moodily gazing into the fire. And so the time went on.

Suddenly there arose the distant sound of guns, booming along on the still night air. To Captain Andinnian it suggested no ulterior thought; brought no cause for agitation: but his mother started up in wild commotion.

"The guns, Karl! The guns!"

"What guns are they?" he exclaimed in surprise. "What are they firing for?"

She did not answer; she only stood still as a statue, her mouth slightly open with intensity of listening; her finger lifted up. In the midst of this, Ann Hopley opened the door without sound, and looked in with a terror-stricken face.

"It's not *him*, ma'am; don't you be afeared. It's some other convicts that are off; but it can't be him. The plan's not yet organized."

And Karl learnt that these were the guns from Portland Island, announcing the escape, or attempted escape, of some of its miserable prisoners.

Well for him if he had learned nothing else! The true and full meaning of what had been so mysterious flashed upon him now, like a sheet of lightning that lights up and reveals the secrets of the darkness. It was not Adam's comforts they were surreptitiously seeking to ameliorate; they were plotting for his escape.

His escape! As the truth took possession of Captain Andinnian, his face grew white with a sickening terror; his brow damp as with a death sweat.

For he knew that nearly all these attempted escapes result in utter failure. The unhappy, deluded victims are re-captured, or drowned, or shot. Sitting there in his shock of agony, his dazed eyes gazing out to the fire, a prevision that death in one shape or other would be his brother's fate, if he did make the rash venture, seated itself firmly

within him, as surely as though he had seen it in some fortune-teller's magic crystal.

"Mother," he said in a low tone, as he took her hand, and the door closed on Ann Hopley, "I understand it all now. I thought, simple that I was, that I had understood it before: and that you were but striving to get a way of conveying trifles in the shape of comforts to Adam. This is dreadful."

"What is the matter with you?" cried Mrs. Andinnian. "You look ready to die."

"The matter is, that this has shocked me. I pray Heaven, Adam will not be so foolhardy as to attempt to escape!"

"And *why* should he not?" blazed forth Mrs. Andinnian.

Karl shook his head. "In nine cases out of ten, the result is nothing but death."

"And the tenth case results in life, in liberty!" she rejoined exultantly. "My brave son does well to try for it."

Karl hid his eyes. The first thought, in the midst of the many tumultuously crowding his brain, was the strangely different estimation different people set on things. Here was his mother glorying in that to-be-attempted escape as if it were some great deed dared by a great general: *he* saw only its results. Whatever they might be: allowing that Adam did escape and regain his liberty: what would the "liberty" be? A life of miserable concealment; of playing at hide-and-seek with the law; a world-wide apprehension, lying on him always, of being retaken. In short, a hunted man, who must not dare to approach the haunts of his fellows, and of whom every other man must be the enemy. To Karl, the present life of degrading labour would be preferable to that.

"Do you wish to keep him there for life—that you may enjoy the benefit of his place at Foxwood and his money?" resumed Mrs. Andinnian, in a tone that she well knew how to make contemptuously bitter. It stung Karl. His answer was full of pain: the pain of despair.

"I wish life had never been for him, mother. Or for me, either. If I could restore Adam to what he has forfeited by giving my own, I would do it willingly. I have not much left to live for."

The tone struck Mrs. Andinnian. She thought that even the reflected disgrace, the stain on his name, scarcely justified it. Karl said a few words to her then of the blight that had fallen on his own life—the severance from Lucy Cleeve. She told him she was sorry: but it was quite evident that she was too much pre-occupied with other things to care about it.

With the morning, Weymouth learnt the fate of the poor convict—it was only one—who had attempted to escape, after whom the guns were let loose like so many blood-hounds. He was retaken. It was a man who had attempted escape once before, and unsuccessfully.

"The plans were badly laid," calmly remarked Mrs. Andinnian.

She did not insist upon Karl's quitting her : he knew all now ; and, though he could not approve, he would not do anything to frustrate : and some more days passed on. Karl fancied, but could not be sure, that the other attempt at escape caused the action of this to be delayed. His mother and Ann Hopley seemed to be always in secret conference, and twice again there came stealthily to the house at night the same warder : or the man whom Karl had taken for one.

CHAPTER VII.

AT THE CHARING-CROSS HOTEL.

ON All Saints' Day, the first of November—and it was as bright a day for the festival as the saints, whether in that world or this, could wish, Captain Andinnian, went up to London, to transact some business with his lawyers, Plunkett and Plunkett. Their chambers were within the precincts of the Temple, and for convenience sake he took up his quarters at the Charing Cross Hotel.

In the course of the afternoon, as he was turning out of Essex Street, having come through the little court from Plunkett and Plunkett's, he ran against a gentleman passing down the Strand. "I beg your pardon," Karl was beginning, and then became suddenly silent. It was Colonel Cleeve.

But, instead of passing on, as Karl might have expected, the colonel stopped and shook him cordially by the hand. To pass him would have jarred on every kindly instinct of his nature. As to the affair with his daughter, he attached no importance to it now, and had three parts forgotten it.

"You have sold out, Captain Andinnian. I—I have been so very sorry for the sad causes that induced the step. Believe me, you have had all along my very best sympathy."

Karl hardly knew what he answered. A few words of murmured thanks ; nothing more.

"You are not well," returned the colonel, regarding the slender form looking thinner than of yore, very thin in its black attire. "This has told upon you."

"It has ; very much. There are some trials that can never be made light in this life," he continued, speaking the thoughts that were ever uppermost in his mind. "This is one of them. I thank you for your sympathy, Colonel Cleeve."

"And that's true, unfortunately," cried the colonel warmly. "You don't know how you are regretted at Winchester by your brother officers."

With another warm handshake, the colonel passed on. Karl walked back to his hotel. In traversing one of its upper passages, a young lady came out of a sitting-room to cross to an opposite chamber. Captain

Andinnian took a step back to let her pass in front of him ; and they met face to face.

" Lucy ! "

" Karl ! "

The salutation broke from each before they well knew where they were or what had happened, amidst a rush of bewildering excitement, of wild joy. They had, no doubt, as in duty bound, been trying to forget each other; this moment of unexpected meeting proved to each how foolish was the fallacy. A dim idea made itself heard within either breast that they ought, in that duty alluded to, to pass on and linger not: but we all know how vain and weak is the human heart. It was not possible: and they stood, hand locked within hand.

Only for an instant. Lucy, looking very weak and ill, leaned back against the door-post for support. Karl stood before her.

" I have just met Colonel Cleeve," he said: " but I had no idea that *you* were in London. Are you staying here? "

" Until to-morrow. We came up yesterday. Papa chose this hotel, as it is convenient for the Folkestone trains. Mamma is here. "

" Lucy, how very ill you look ! "

" Yes. I had fever and ague in the summer, and do not get strong again. We are going to Paris for change. You do not look well either," added Lucy.

" I have not had fever: but I have had other things to try me," was his reply.

" Oh, Karl ! I have been so grieved ! " she earnestly said. " I did not know your brother, but I—I seemed to feel all the dreadful trouble as much as you could have felt it. When we are not strong, I think we do feel things. "

" You call it by its right name, Lucy—a *dreadful* trouble. No one but myself can know what it has been to me. "

They were gazing at each other yearningly: Lucy with her sweet brown eyes so full of tender compassion, Karl's grey-blue ones with a world of sorrowful regret in their depths. As she had done in their interview when they were parting, so she now did again—put out her hand to him, with a whisper meant to soothe.

" You will live it down, Karl. "

He slightly shook his head: and took her hand to hold it between his.

" It is only since this happened that I have become at all reconciled to—to what had to be done at Winchester, Lucy. It would have been so greatly worse, had you been tied to me by—by any engagement. "

" Not worse for you, Karl, but better. I should have helped you so much to bear it. "

" My darling ! "

The moment the words had crossed his lips, he remembered what honour and his long-ago-passed word to Colonel Cleeve demanded of

him—that he should absolutely abstain from showing any tokens of affection for Lucy. Nay, to observe it strictly, he ought not to have stayed to talk with her.

“I beg your pardon, Lucy,” he said, dropping her hand.

She understood quite well : a faint colour mantled in her pale face.

“God bless you, Lucy,” he whispered. “Farewell.”

“O Karl—a moment,” she implored with agitation, hardly knowing, in the pain of parting, what she said. “Just to tell you that I have not forgotten. I never shall forget. My regret for what had to be lies on me still.”

“God bless you,” he repeated, in deep emotion. “God bless and restore you, Lucy !”

Once more their fingers met in a brief handshake. And then they parted ; he going one way, she the other ; and the world had grown dim again.

Later in the day Karl heard it incidentally mentioned by some people in the coffee-room, that Colonel and Mrs. Cleeve with their daughter and two servants were going to make a prolonged stay on the Continent for the benefit of the young lady's health, who had been suffering from fever. Little did they think that the quiet, distinguished looking man in mourning, who had but come in to ask for some information, and was waiting while the waiter brought it, had more to do with the young lady's failing health than any fever.

Captain Andinnian took his breakfast next morning in private, and the waiter brought him a newspaper. While listlessly unfolding it, he took the opportunity to ask a question.

“Have Colonel Cleeve and his family left the hotel ?”

“Yes, sir. Just gone off for Folkestone. Broiled ham, sir ; eggs ; steak with mushrooms,” continued the man, removing sundry covers.

“Thank you. You need not wait.”

But—ere the man had well closed the door, a startled sound like a groan of agony burst from Karl's lips. He sprung from his seat at a bound, his eyes riveted on the newspaper in one stare of disbelieving horror. The paragraph had a heading in large letters—

“ATTEMPTED ESCAPE FROM PORTLAND ISLAND.

DEATH OF THE PRISONER, SIR ADAM ANDINNIAN.”

Karl let the newspaper fall, and buried his face on the table-cloth to shut out the light. He had not courage to read more at once. He lay there praying that it might not be true.

Alas ! it was too true. Two prisoners had attempted to escape in concert ; Sir Adam Andinnian and a man named Cole. They succeeded in reaching the water and got off in a small boat lying ready in wait. Some warders pursued them in another boat ; and, after an exciting chase in the dark night, came up with them as they reached

the Weymouth side. Sir Adam was shot dead by a pistol; the small boat was upset, and one of the warders drowned. Cole was supposed to have made his escape.

Such was the statement given in the newspapers. And however uncertain the minor details might be at this early stage, one part admitted of no doubt—Adam Andinnian was dead.

"I seemed to foresee it," moaned Karl. "From the very first, the persuasion has lain upon me that this would be the ending."

Ere many minutes elapsed, ere he had attempted to touch a morsel of breakfast, a gentleman was shown in. It was Mr. Plunkett: a stout man in spectacles, with a large red nose. He had the *Times* in his hand. Captain Andinnian's paper lay open on the breakfast table; Captain Andinnian's face, as he rose to receive his visitor, betrayed its own story.

"I see; you have read the tidings," began Mr. Plunkett, sitting down. "It is a dreadful thing."

"Do—do you think there's any chance that it may not be true, Mr. Plunkett?" he rejoined in an imploring tone.

"There's not the slightest as to the main fact—that Sir Adam is dead," replied the lawyer decisively. "What *could* he have been thinking of, to hazard it?"

Karl sat shading his face.

"I'll tell you what it is, sir—there was a spice of madness in your brother. I said so when he shot Scott. There must have been. And who, but a madman, would try to get away from Portland Island?"

"Nay. A rash act; but not one that implies madness, Mr. Plunkett." And then there ensued a silence.

"I have intruded on you this morning to express my best sympathy, and to ask whether I can be of any service to you, Captain Andinnian. I beg your pardon: Sir Karl, I ought to say. If——"

Karl had raised his head in resentment—in defiance. It caused the lawyer's break.

"Nay, but you are Sir Karl, sir. You succeed to your brother."

"The reminder grated on me, Mr. Plunkett."

"The title's yours and the estates are yours. Every earthly thing is yours."

"Yes, yes; I suppose so."

"Well, if we can do anything for you, Sir Karl, down there"—indicating with a nod of his head the direction in which Portland Island might be supposed to lie—"or at Foxwood, you have only to send to us. I hope you understand that I am not speaking now with a view to business, but as a friend," concluded Mr. Plunkett. "I'll say no more now, for I see you are not yourself."

"Indeed I am not," replied Karl. "I thank you all the same. As soon as I can I must get down to my mother."

Never had Karl imagined distress and anguish so great as that which he witnessed on his arrival at Weymouth. For once all his mother's pride of power had deserted her. She flung herself at the feet of Karl, demanding *why* he did not persist in his objection to the contemplated attempt, and interfere openly, even by declaring all to the governor of Portland prison, and so save his brother. It was altogether too distressing for Karl to bear.

The first account was in the main correct. Adam Andinnian and the warder were both dead : the one shot, the other drowned.

It was understood that the body might be given up to them for burial. Though whether this was a special favour, accorded to the entreaties of Mrs. Andinnian, or a not-unusual one, Karl knew not. He would have thought it better that the interment should have been at Weymouth and made one of the utmost privacy : but Mrs. Andinnian would have him taken to Foxwood, and she despatched Karl thither to make arrangements.

On the day but one after Karl reached Foxwood, all that remained of poor Sir Adam arrived. Mrs. Andinnian came in company. She could not bear to part even with the dead.

"I wish I could have seen him," remarked Karl sadly, as he stood with his hand on the coffin.

"I have seen him, Karl," she answered amid her blinding tears. "They suffered me to look at him. His face was peaceful."

They, and they only, saving Hewitt, attended the funeral. He was buried in the family vault, side by side with Sir Joseph and Lady Andinnian.

What an ending, for a young man who, but a few short months before, had been full of health and hope and life !

But the world, in its cold charity, said it was better so.

(To be continued.)



NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE IN UNDRRESS.

WHAT could possibly be more pleasant than to be introduced to a man of note, as he sits be-slipped and at ease in his dressing gown, and to have him skilfully drawn into talk on his favourite topics—talk at once shrewd and dreamy, and dashed now and then with sub-acid, semi-cynical humour? Scarcely anything. This sort of pleasure has transformed into reverent listeners many men who were by no means strangers to the *cacoëthes loquendi*. Quaint old Isaac Walton was one; frivolous, self-indulgent James Boswell was another; versatile but flighty Crabb Robinson in the last generation was a third. These, after all, are but types of what is a common passion; and their writings remain popular because they listened well to men who were greater than themselves. They were in this truly representative. We are ever fain to get a more close and familiar glimpse of those who have greatly moved, delighted, or instructed us. We long to come near to them as to daily companions. To touch the hands of those who have touched their hands is often deemed a privilege, where closer access is denied. And it is not fair to dub this tendency, as some cynical writers have done, as being only flunkeyish and despicable. It is really the honest utterance of a great glad gratitude; a recognition of benefits conferred, and a desire to signalize them duly. That the form it takes is sometimes awkward, is only an added proof of its spontaneity. And this tendency in human nature has demanded great verge in our own time. The impulse towards democratic opinions—to a sort of levelling and equalizing of men—defeats itself in the reactionary appetite for personality and individuality in all sections of literature. America, the modern home of democracy is, in its literature, the most individual and hero-worshipping. It loves gossip, it magnifies its great men in anecdote; and, defying time, actually shows the wonder of myth-making going on before our very eyes. In this way things tend to be made even again, in spite of constitution-declared equalities.

The last gift we have received in this kind is, not without a certain fitness, American. The man who made it a sort of study to disclose nothing that it "was desirable the public and the critics should not overhear," who was truly an American in the desire to peep and peer, but to tell no secrets of his own, if he could at all help it, has, nevertheless, been made to render confession—to utter his most private thoughts, desires, and failings in the ear of all the world. His half Yankee-like determination to lose nothing has defeated his deeper purpose; his hunger for strange facts and his morbid and unceasing scrutiny of the unallowed corners in human nature have become the medium of involuntary self-

revelations, which he would never have made indiscriminately of his own accord. We were invited to come into his private chamber, to seat ourselves close beside him at the fireside, while those of his own family put questions and press for reasons; and we have nought to do but to look and listen, and congratulate ourselves upon our privilege. And a rare privilege it is, in spite of all deductions that might be made; for, whilst there is much to puzzle and perplex, there is also much that is clear, practical, gossipy, and enjoyable. He not only analyses morbid moods in our hearing, throws down paradoxes and moral enigmas, but he gives piquant anecdotes, and most masterly portraits, in a few sentences, of the distinguished people he met with. His fire-side talk, which we have now before us in the form of six goodly volumes of "Notes" * is a peculiar mixture: but there is in it a large proportion of popular and attractive matter. How lightly he confides to these note-books the flitting impression of the moment, never dreaming he was fixing it there for a cold, critical posterity; how naïvely he sets down the record of an *outré* or exceptional characteristic, and all with the notion that it might some day be of use. And here we see the reason why these note-books of Hawthorne's are at once so attractive and so unsatisfactory. They are, first of all, frank and unguarded—to an extent that we are certain they would not have been had he fancied they would ever be printed. He had distinctly given orders that no life of him should be written, and he had destroyed a number of his earlier note-books, no doubt intending to do the same by these when his purpose with them should be served. His family have conferred on us a great benefit in the printing of these; but we are certain Hawthorne himself would not have willingly sanctioned it. And then, again, as he never took note without some more or less direct literary intention, we get from these diaries, even where they are least complete and connected, some notion of how he gradually built up these wonderfully suggestive stories of his, which, after all, are hardly stories in the ordinary sense, but rather artistically framed speculations on the most recondite of human motives and tendencies,—allegories rarely refined, exhibiting the spiritual possibilities and destinies of mankind.

In one of his note-books we find him, for example, questioning the effect which the slaying of a fellow-creature, in circumstances such as made the act really innocent, would have upon a brooding and speculative character, every way more inclined to thought and scepticism, than to action and belief. The suggestion frequently, and in varied forms, recurs to him. How, at last, he did work out such a theme, with what subtlety, delicacy, and variety of *motif*, English readers will soon have a chance of seeing in the publication of his latest novel—"Septimius." In these last note-books, too, we get a new clue whereby

* Passages from the French and Italian Note-Books of Nathaniel Hawthorne. In two volumes. Strahan. And American and English Note-Books, 4 vols.

to trace the "genesis" of that remarkable creation, "The Marble Faun," or, "Transformation," as the English publishers have christened it. Hawthorne had an early friend, Henry Thoreau, at whose wonderful faculty in observing, and in attaching to himself the lower creatures, he never ceased to wonder. In note-books and in conversations he celebrated this Thoreau's peculiar powers. When speaking of him with reference to "Pansie"—for Hawthorne got the hint of Dr. Dolliver from Thoreau—he remarks how vain it is that he should try to perpetuate this wonderful naturalist. By a sort of instinct, he says, Thoreau made the wild creatures of woods and waters friendly and at home with him; and even then the thought of a romance, in which the chief character should unite the sylvan creatures with man in something like sympathy and mutual confidence had occurred to him. But nothing at that time came of it. He seems to have abandoned his intention, till he was in Italy, and gazed on the "Faun of Praxiteles," at the Villa Borghese. He then writes down his impression thus:

"We afterwards went into the Sculpture Gallery, where I looked at the 'Faun of Praxiteles,' and was sensible of a peculiar charm in it—a sylvan beauty and homeliness, friendly and wild at once. The lengthened, but not preposterous ears, and the little tail which we infer, have an exquisite effect, and make the spectator smile in his very heart. This race of Fauns was the most delightful of all that antiquity imagined. It seems to me that a story, with all sorts of fun and pathos in it, might be contrived on the idea of their species having become intermingled with the human race; a family with the Faun blood in them having prolonged itself from the classic era till our own days. The tail might have disappeared by dint of constant intermarriage with ordinary mortals, but the pretty hairy ears should occasionally reappear in members of the family, and the moral instincts and intellectual characteristics of the Faun might be most picturesquely brought out, without detriment to the human interest of the story."

And he goes over and over again to look at the Faun; the idea that had occurred to him years before now taking more and more definite shape. But it is very remarkable that the "simple fun and pathos" were not realized. About the same time as he first saw the Faun, he also saw a "Dead Monk" laid out in a church, from whose nostrils the blood streamed down; and somehow the two things blended together inextricably in his mind, and suggested themselves as symbols for an artistic statement of the manner in which sin may stimulate the hitherto dormant moral powers. And it was always so, more or less, with him. Naturally good-tempered, hopeful, sunshiny, he had not the power to "write a sunshiny book," though he often expressed the wish that he had. A very peculiar trait in Hawthorne is this, that he could not write till something of the weird and abnormal had mixed itself with his imaginings. With that peculiar power of abstracting himself from his own intellectual activity, as it were, he sets down in the calmest manner how his stories took shapes which he himself had not at first designed, and recognizes himself as being, in fact, a "haunted man." And so he really was. In addition to his shyness and love of morbid meditation, he would have been simply melancholic and helpless had it

not been a necessity of his nature that he should go out and observe; that he remained literally unproductive until he had caught from real life at once the impulse to production and the symbol with which to work. It is noticeable that after the conception of "The Marble Faun" had come to something like clearness in his mind, he then craved absolute retirement and solitude, notwithstanding that he was still in Italy, amidst its many sights and scenes, its clear air, and stately architecture, and gorgeous paintings. But when he had once written out his conception, the need for contact with the real world returned in double force. This necessity, indeed, was what saved him. He constantly felt his dependence upon others. He needed friends, and clave closely to them, refusing to believe that they were anywise other than that he thought them. Thus he kept open for himself, a sort of sweet avenue of connection with the outer world, and from this sheltered avenue he delighted to look forth on the "stream of life that wandered by," and to take not unkindly note of its circuits and side eddies. For, notwithstanding that he had such a liking for subjects that are "eerie," weird, supernatural, and much helped in their treatment by solitary musings, Nathaniel Hawthorne was anything but a recluse. No one could have more readily caught the innocently grotesque side of any individual he met with; no one could have more relished a joke, or enjoyed the changes and excitements of modern travel. Nothing escapes him; and occasionally a touch of cynicism gives a fillip of interest to his observation; yet never of such a cast as to render it really unkind. Nothing could well be more illustrative of this than his decision on spiritualistic phenomena:

"We have had written communications, through Miss —, with several spirits—my wife's father, mother, two brothers, and a sister who died long ago in infancy, a certain Mary Hall, who announces herself as the guardian spirit of Miss —, and, queerest of all, a Mary Runnel, who seems to be a wandering spirit, having relations with nobody, but thrusts her finger into everybody's affairs. My wife's mother is the principal communicant; she expresses strong affection, and rejoices at the opportunity of conversing with her daughter. She often says very pretty things, but there is a lack of substance in her talk, a want of grip, a delusive show, a sentimental surface, with no bottom beneath it. The same sort of thing has struck me in all the poetry and prose that I have read from spiritualistic sources. I should judge that these effusions emanated from earthly minds, but had undergone some process that had deprived them of solidity and warmth We have tried the spirits by various test questions, in every one of which they have failed egregiously. Here, however, the aforesaid Mary Runnel comes into play. The other spirits have told us that the veracity of this spirit is not to be depended upon; and so, whenever it is possible, poor Mary Runnel is thrust forward to bear the odium of every mistake or falsehood It is very funny, where a response or a matter of fact has not been thus certified, how invariably Mary Runnel is made to assume the discredit of it on its turning out to be false. It is the most ingenious arrangement that could possibly have been contrived; and, somehow or other, the pranks of this ying spirit give a reality to the conversations which the more respectable ghosts quite fail in imparting. The whole matter seems to me a sort of dreaming awake. It resembles a dream in that the whole material is from the first in the dreamer's mind, though concealed at various depths below the surface; the dead appear alive, as they always do in dreams; unexpected combinations occur, as continually in dreams; the mind speaks through the various persons of the drama, and sometimes astonishes itself

with its own wit, wisdom, and eloquence, as often in dreams; but in both cases the intellectual manifestations are really of a very flimsy texture. Mary Runnel is the only personage who does not come evidently from dreamland; and she, I think, represents that lurking scepticism, that sense of unreality, of which we are often conscious, amid the most vivid phantasmagoria of a dream. I should be glad to believe in the genuineness of these spirits, if I could; but the above is the conclusion to which my soberest thoughts tend. There remains, of course, a great deal for which I cannot account; and I cannot sufficiently wonder at the pigheadedness both of metaphysicians and physiologists in not accepting the phenomena, so far as to make them the subject of investigation."

Were one to judge merely from first impressions, one might very easily be misled as to the great source of the fascination of Hawthorne's stories, which really lies in the subtle but almost imperceptible way in which real circumstances are constantly slipped into a medium the most shadowy and fantastic. The framework of real circumstances which he gives to "*The Scarlet Letter*," to "*Blithedale*," and to "*The Mosses from an Old Manse*," are only somewhat extreme illustrations of the way in which he everywhere sought to bring into intimate contact the most shadowy and the most real and substantial elements in human nature. His works are thus the truest emblems of his life. Brooding, contemplative beyond most men, haunted by ideas which seemed to demand for their complete development a mind abstracted from the haze of ordinary sympathies, he yet never abandoned himself to the joys of solitude, which at first soften and expand, and then speedily cramp and freeze up the finer feelings and benevolences. He constantly felt that his one chance of escape from the danger peculiar to such dispositions as his, lay in more or less real association with persons whose tastes and ways of life were different from his own. He himself deliberately put on record his opinion that nothing could be more beneficial for a literary man than to be thrown among people who did not sympathize with his pursuits, and whose pursuits he had to go out of himself to appreciate. It is told that, when he returned home from college to Salem—"as though," he said, with a sort of sad, flickering humour, "it were for him the inevitable centre of the universe"—he declined all manner of invitations from people of the better class, and would "seek out illiterate old friends, and familiarly hob-nob with them." To this peculiar feeling—for it was clearly something deeper than a conviction come at by any process of reasoning—we may no doubt attribute in great measure the steady patience and goodwill with which he applied himself to the mechanical duties he was called on to perform in the several offices he held—the coal-weighing at Boston, and the consular examinations at Liverpool. His stolid patience and good humour are indeed very remarkable in a man of such peculiar genius—a genius that led him by preference to take up the most morbid studies and abnormal conditions of life, and to make them the materials for romances. But, after all, this pertains to the very character of the man. He seems imaginative, fanciful, working in materials that he may mould as fantastically as he pleases. It is really the reverse. He

needs to gather his facts by a slow process of selection, consequent on the most inquisitorial investigation. He takes nothing on hearsay, but must test everything for himself. As some physicians have found it needful to resort to experiments on themselves, the more surely to detect the virtues of certain subtle poisons, so Hawthorne must reduce all that is abnormal, morbid, and mixed in emotional experience into his own life. And he needs the aid of facts as talismans wherewith to lure and master his own nature, and bend it the better to his purpose. It is on account of their letting us, far more completely than could have been done otherwise, into the secret processes of his art, that these note-books are, from a critical point of view, so inexpressibly valuable. Where they are least interesting in themselves, they are all the richer in this regard. They show us how closely this great man studied his themes; how careful he was not to commit himself in any way; how persistently he returned to his work again and again; and how difficult he found it to bring anything up to the high level of his own exacting judgment. Every page, free, sparkling, graceful as it seems, is the result of long, unwearied labour and meditation. He wrought on the same principle as any anatomist, taking nothing for granted. If he hears of a murder of specially horrible character, where the motives that led to it are so mixed and involved as to force from us the admission that, after all, a thread of something not wholly dark and diabolic runs through the perpetrator's thoughts and feelings, he must first microscopically examine every fact and detail with the watchful brain of a detective, so that he may be able to place himself in the very position of the criminal, and so faithfully report on his mood, and all the varying influences that led to it. What Mrs. Hawthorne wrote in the preface to the English note-books has a wider significance than she there gave to it:—"He perceived morbidness wherever it existed, instantly, as if by the illumination of his own steady cheer; and he had the plastic power of putting himself into each person's situation, and of looking from every point of view, which made his charity most comprehensive. From this cause he naturally attracted confidences, and became confessor to very many sinning and suffering souls, to whom he gave tender sympathy and help, while resigning judgment to the Omniscient and All-wise." Indeed, after the publication of "*The Scarlet Letter*," we read that he was constantly applied to by such persons for advice and help.

Hawthorne was in many ways a "confessor;" but in his most repulsive subjects and characters there is a slight air as of justification for the wrongdoer. A kind of subdued apology for the vileness of human nature runs through his writings. This is not because he held light views as to duty—his views of duty were as strict and as high as those of any of his Puritan ancestors; but he desires to see everything in relation to a prevailing Providence; and the necessity that lies on him, in

order to make this the better apparent, to rigidly reduce the claims of individuals, lead him almost of set purpose to mix and conglomerate motives. He himself has written "Blessed are all simple emotions be they bright or dark; it is only the mixture of them that is infernal." But in spite of this he dealt in mixed emotions till it would almost seem as though he had no taste for simpler ones, or had wholly lost the faculty of interesting himself in them; as those who have been accustomed to highly spiced food and drink, cannot bring themselves afterwards to relish foods and drinks that are absolutely pure and unmixed. It was his morality and his need for actual contact with men, that saved him from the last and worst results of cynicism. He is no hero-worshipper. He sees far too clearly into human nature and detects its seamy places too easily to be a sentimentalist in any form; but then he is in the best sense a believer, though not perhaps precisely after the orthodox type. He has firm faith in a divine purpose that embraces all man's puny efforts and takes them up and includes them, to educe from them at last a largesse of benefit for humanity, however far the individuals themselves may have failed to recognize, or to reach up to the height of this divine design. And so, notwithstanding that he is sometimes very divided as to several open courses of human action, he never really doubts. The more we get to know him we feel the more surely that he is a genuine believer in goodness and in God. In spite of his strange curiosity, which cannot even be restrained in face of the most perilous problems, he still keeps intact a region of his spiritual nature sacred to mystery. This man, with his "awful insight," and his morbid melancholy, yet held firmly by the spiritual world, refusing to surrender the inmost citadel. Here he takes his position with the most commonplace of men; and in this lies one element of his greatness. His works, while they may sometimes raise question as to conventional judgments on this or that action, always encourage a spirit of reverence for the spirit of man itself—from which flows unceasingly the true morality that ever renews itself in love and sympathy. With the following words, which make clear this point, we take our leave of one who has good claims on our gratitude:—

"Lights and shadows," he says, "are continually flitting across my inward sky, and I know neither whence they come nor whither they go; nor do I inquire too closely into them. It is dangerous to look too minutely into such phenomena. It is apt to create a substance where at first there was mere shadow If at any time there should seem to be an expression unintelligible from one soul to another, it is best not to strive to interpret it in earthly language, but wait for the soul to make itself understood; and, were we to wait a thousand years, we need deem it no more time than we can spare. It is not that I have any love of mystery, but because I abhor it, and because I have often felt that words may be a thick and darksome veil of mystery between the soul and the truth which it seeks. Wretched were we, indeed, if we had no better means of communicating ourselves, no fairer garb in which to array our essential being, than these poor rags and tatters of Babel. Yet words are not without their use, even for purposes of explanation—but merely for explaining outward acts, and external things, leaving the soul's life to explain itself in its own way."

H. A. P.

FROM A DETECTIVE'S NOTE-BOOK.

DEAR SIR,—I have need of your counsel upon a matter that appears involved in mystery. Be good enough to look in upon me this evening at eight o'clock, or, if engaged, to-morrow evening at the same hour.

Yours faithfully,

ALEXANDER CASHAL.

Such was the note I received by private hand one Wednesday morning as I was leisurely reading the *Times* over my second cup of coffee. It was near ten o'clock, but I had been up late the previous night looking into another complicated case that hitherto had utterly baffled the investigation of my brother detectives.

It was not the first time that I, a private detective, had been summoned by the authorities at Scotland Yard to inquire into matters they had not themselves succeeded in unravelling. An appeal to me was always a last resource with them. They did not like doing it; it was a confession of weakness that galled and irritated them. But in no one case entrusted to me had I ever failed; and there were occasions when, willing or otherwise, they found themselves obliged to resort to the aid of James Greenhill.

The above note came from Mr. Cashal, the confidential clerk and manager of the banking firm of Oliver and West. They, too, had once before employed me in a matter of some delicacy, which had been concluded to their entire satisfaction. Hence a second summons.

"What's up now, I wonder?" I exclaimed, half aloud, but without feeling any particular surprise at the request. I had been too long in the trade for that. In the early days, when first starting in the line that seemed especially to be my vocation above all others, each fresh case entrusted to me would set my blood tingling with expectation and a certain nervous dread of failure. But this feeling had long passed away, and given place to a calm self-possession which comes to most men, when their powers have been well tested by experience.

I swallowed down my second cup, and went on with the *Times* until I had finished the leading article I was reading. Then I took out my pocket diary, and jotted down a note.

"Wednesday. Oliver and West. Call to-night at eight o'clock upon Mr. Cashal."

I turned over the leaves. There were several cases on hand, but all at this present moment in abeyance: waiting for fresh evidence to turn up; fresh clue. This night, at any rate, I was at liberty.

There is one essential necessary to the making of a good detective

—an analytical mind. A mind capable of judging of cause and effect; capable without seeing the cause to judge of it by a given effect. It may be called a suggestive mind if you will: with capacity to build up out of nothing, link after link of a complete chain, and bind together the extremities: thus forming a perfect whole. Now and then, in my own case, these chains have been mistakes, and I have had to throw them away: but even in such instances they have always served their purpose. Never was a wrong clue taken up and forged into one of these chains, but in demolishing and dismissing it from my mind, it has, directly or indirectly, invariably suggested the right chain to be taken up in its place; tracing home crime to the guilty, clearing suspicion from the innocent; bringing darkness to light.

The note with which this paper is headed was addressed to me in full. "Mr. James Greenhill. Dr. Johnson's Court, Temple." The handwriting was in the, to me, well known characters of Mr. Cashal. From the hour appointed I felt sure, that whether necessarily or the contrary, he wished secrecy to be observed.

The banking house of Oliver and West, is situated west of Farringdon Street; but whether in Fleet Street or the Strand, or yet more in the immediate neighbourhood of the Parks, cannot for obvious reasons be disclosed.

Having this morning nothing very particularly pressing for attention, it struck me that time would not be altogether wasted in taking a walk past the building. Possibly the outward aspect of the stone might wear an air of mystery.

A detective in the exercise of his calling, has to do many things for which he could give no reason at the moment: ideas that suggest themselves, and appearing to be nothing but ideas, coming from no given premises; leading apparently to no useful end. It will generally be found that many of these ideas or impulses prove of the very last importance: and one of the great distinctions between a good detective and a bad one, is just the difference existing between the man who has these ideas and acts upon them and the man who has them not.

In a word, to the making of a successful detective there is absolutely required the faculty of Imagination.

"Who brought this note?" I asked of the maid, when she appeared to take away the breakfast things.

"A man in brass buttons, sir," she replied.

"Elderly?"

"Oh, very old," returned the girl, who doubtless looked upon every one ten years her senior as a species of patriarch. "Very old," she reiterated nodding her head to give strength to her affirmation. "Grey hair and whiskers, and hardly any teeth left."

It was easy to recognize Coles, Mr. Cashal's confidential servant, by the description. From this fact it might be inferred that the manager

wished to be seen upon a personal matter ; probably concerning himself rather than the bank in general. Otherwise no doubt he would have entrusted his note to one of the bank messengers—all tried and faithful men.

I strolled out, sauntering along as if for the pleasure of taking the air. Known to many by sight, to seem full of business might possibly arouse suspicion should I chance to meet a person guilty of some wrong act. To an accusing conscience all things tell home. Experience has taught that the very smallest precautions in these cases should be observed.

The distance was not great, and in spite of sauntering, the bank was soon reached. All seemed quiet and orderly. Eminently respectable. The surrounding houses were occupied in plying their thriving trades. They looked quiet and harmless enough. Exactly opposite the bank a house had an empty second-floor with bills in the windows announcing that it was to be let. The first floor was tenanted by a money-lending concern, whose transactions were carefully concealed from the gaze of the curious by tall, brown wire blinds. The dirty windows seemed to throw out a reproach upon the public for allowing them to remain neglected.

In my pocket-book there happened to be an open cheque upon Oliver and West. An impulse prompted me to cash it. Entering the house, the swing doors closed behind me.

At that moment there were but two clerks in the front counting-house : a middle-aged, respectable man, and a younger gentleman who lived with Mr. Cashal. We were all three known to each other. The younger clerk came forward. Upon recognizing me he suddenly though slightly started, and the blood mounted to his usually pale face. I noted the signs whilst handing him the cheque. It was for thirty pounds. "Twenty-five in notes, if you please," I said. "Five in half-sovereigns."

He first took out the notes, and I fancied that his hand trembled as he did so ; but I was not certain. Twice over he counted out the gold, in ten half-sovereigns as requested ; and in handing it over—for some reason he did not use the shovel—he dropped two of the coins through his fingers.

I thanked him, wished him good morning, and left.

This was curious. The young man's manner was strange and suspicious. Here, at the very commencement, was something springing up as it were out of nothing. Without knowledge of what unusual occurrence was taking place beyond the fact of there being a mystery ; with no possible clue in hand ; I had struck upon the first link in the chain that would lead up to a positive conclusion. Whatever the difficulty to be solved ; whether the sifting of a robbery or yet greater crime ; that young man was in some way connected with it. Yet I

knew him to be a nephew of Mr. Cashal's wife, living with them as an adopted son.

It had better here briefly be stated that Mr. Cashal lived at the bank. The first floor was occupied for business purposes: one of the front rooms being more particularly Mr. Cashal's private business room, of which he alone kept the key, and to which he alone ever had access. The second floor, a large, handsome suite of apartments, was comfortably and even luxuriously fitted up by the firm for the especial occupation of Mr. and Mrs. Cashal. They had no children, and their nephew, William Hawthorn, had been in part adopted by them. He was an orphan, and I had never heard anything against him in any way.

The day passed on towards a close. Days do pass on to a close, somehow, whether you have much or little to do. With me when not busy they pass quickly; but when occupied with an interesting case the hours absolutely fly away.

Precisely at eight o'clock I presented myself at the private door of the bank, and rang the visitors' bell. This brought forth Mr. Cashal's confidential servant, Coles; he whose portrait in the early part of the day had been so graphically drawn by my handmaiden. The door was opened so quickly and suddenly, that it seemed as if Coles had had a hold upon the lock, in anticipation of the summons.

Before there was time to say a word he held up a warning finger, quietly. Making way for me to pass he shut the door without sound, and led the way upstairs to Mr. Cashal's private business room. Unannounced I passed in, and the door was closed upon me. At the further end of the room stood Mr. Cashal, his hands behind his coat tails. A favourite attitude of his when waiting for any one, or if in deep thought.

He was a man past the middle-age. His large, well developed head was bald, with the exception of the sides and the back, where still flourished thick, curly brown hair. His fine, portly figure stood out well in the gas-light; which light at the same time revealed an anxious, troubled expression of countenance.

"How do you do?" was his first natural remark as he shook hands, delivered in the deep pleasant tones of his voice. There was something I liked in that voice; a generous, open ring about it. The moment it was heard you felt the tones were those of a clever and a business man: you also felt certain they belonged to a man who might be trusted. The expression of his face corresponded with the voice.

He placed a seat quite close to his own desk, and sat down in his room, cane-bottomed chair. We were not a yard apart from each other.

"I knew you would be punctual, Mr. Greenhill," he said. "I remember of old that you were never a moment behind time."

"I have always found, sir," I replied, "that to be punctual is the easiest thing in the world. So easy, that a want of it admits of no excuse. And, to be candid, I always expect in others what I invariably observe myself. I hope your communication to me to-night is of no very painful nature?"

"I fear it is not much less," returned the manager. "Let us as calmly and clearly as possible go into the matter."

I drew my chair yet an inch or two closer, and he began after a momentary pause, as if given to collecting his thoughts.

"You know, Mr. Greenhill, that this room is my own private sanctum, to which no one has access even for the purposes of dusting: the key of which is never for one moment out of my possession?"

I nodded. "I remember that, sir."

"By day and by night," continued Mr. Cashal in a more dreamy tone, as if going over the matter in his own mind rather than giving information to another: "by day and by night that key is in my possession. Waking it is in my hand; never for one instant do I, or have I, ever left it in the lock. By night I place it under my pillow, and as I leave it when I go to sleep, so I find it in the morning when I awake. How then am I to account for the entrances into the room and for the abstractions that take place?"

"Entrances and abstractions!" I repeated in a low tone. "Do you mean, sir, that this room is entered without your knowledge; without your being able to account for it; and for the purpose of robbery?"

"I do," he replied. "The room is entered systematically. By which I mean that it is not only entered once or twice but regularly and at intervals. And after such entrances I miss things of value. It is only by this means, indeed, that I can trace these entrances. Robbery is a terrible word, but no other term can be applied to the act."

"Will you first of all tell me, sir, what description of articles disappear? Are they deeds, or——"

"Not deeds," he interrupted, "as a rule: though once an important document was taken, which has since caused me much trouble and anxiety. If in three months' time it should not be forthcoming, I know not what will be the consequence. But as a rule it is not deeds that are taken. Occasionally it has been diamonds; several times money; once, a thick gold chain with a wonderfully curious locket attached to it, entrusted to me only the previous day by a client of ours who was going abroad for nine or twelve months. Only last Saturday night I left a bag of sixty sovereigns on this very desk, and on Monday morning, when I entered the room at one o'clock, it had disappeared."

"Do you suppose," I asked, "that the room is entered by day or by night?"

"By day undoubtedly," he replied. "It must be so."

"I cannot as yet see your inference."

"It must be by day," he returned emphatically; his tone slightly irritable; by which might be gathered that he was trying to persuade himself into the belief, and that he knew he was. "It must be by day," he reiterated. "You forget that I sleep with the key under my pillow. That as I leave it at night, so I find it in the morning."

"But you say that it does not leave your possession during the day either. There must be a duplicate to the lock, sir."

"There is not," he replied in a calmer tone. "There is no duplicate."

"Some one may have taken a model of your key, and so made a duplicate. Such a thing is quite possible."

"And such an idea had suggested itself to me," he answered. "For this reason I had the lock changed, and one of Chubb's best and safest patent locks substituted. It has made no difference. The very next day, as it happened, I missed a bag of sovereigns. So there is an end of that suggestion."

"One moment, Mr. Cashal. How long has this been going on?"

"As nearly as possible, three months."

"Three months. You say the entrances are effected by day. This I cannot quite understand. You leave it safely at night, and in the morning you find your room has been broken into. Yet you say it is visited *by day*. At what hour in the morning do you enter it?"

"Before this happened I entered it at all hours. Ten, twelve, one; sometimes a whole day might pass, without my having occasion to come in."

"But since the robbery?—this is what I wish to know more particularly."

"You will be surprised at my answer. Mr. Greenhill, this has made a coward of me. To feel that I have a thief or thieves about me, has terribly affected me. I am getting into such a nervous state, that I shall soon lose control over myself. And now I dare never enter the room until one or two o'clock in the afternoon."

"I fail to catch your reason, sir."

"It is a nervous dread upon me—a dread of going in and finding something gone. And do you not see," he added, his tone indeed one of dread, almost of horror, "that if my room is entered in the night it fixes the crime upon an inmate of my house?"

"And so," I interrupted, "narrows the circle, and makes it all the easier for us to detect the intruder."

"True. It narrows the circle terribly. My servants are all above suspicion. Old, tried, faithful; every one of them; there are but two besides Coles, and they have both been with me nearly fourteen years: old, simple women. There remains myself, Mrs. Cashal, and our nephew."

"Yourself and your wife are one," I remarked. "There remains—your nephew."

"Surely you would not throw suspicion upon him?"

"I did not say so. But I am presuming that the room is entered by night."

"My nephew is as much above suspicion as I am," replied Mr. Cashal. "I would trust him with untold gold, all the world over. Only those who know him know his worth."

"We are nevertheless sometimes mistaken in our estimate of other men's characters," I replied. "Pardon me, sir, the remark. It is the duty of a detective to look at a difficulty in all its bearings; to search for reasons amongst improbabilities. Truth is stranger than fiction. Pardon again, if I say that you yourself are an illustration of the axiom when you deliberately announce your inability to enter the room until one o'clock in the day. I cannot help adding that you have acted not only indiscreetly, but contrary to your usual reason and judgment. Without giving yourself a chance of discovering the thief. I would not have believed the assertion from any lips but *your own*."

"You cannot understand my temperament," replied the manager, colouring up painfully. "This matter has completely unnerved me. I feel almost as if I myself were guilty of theft; as if I were a criminal. I scarcely know how to face people. I have not dared to tell the partners of the circumstance. It seems as though blame ought to be thrown upon me. Never has anything of this nature happened to me before. And it is because I cannot stand it much longer that I have sent for you."

"You have done well, sir. Undoubtedly we shall soon sift the matter to its foundation. Hitherto you have refused to face it. Now it must be gone into with courage. But if you place it in my hands all suggestions must be adopted, and my counsel followed."

"Be it so," replied the manager after a pause. And a sigh of relief at the tardy resolve seemed to escape him.

"Your chief reason, as can be seen, Mr. Cashal, for refusing to believe the room is entered at night, is, that in such a case, it would seem to point to your wife's nephew as the culprit—for I presume you have no other visitor in the house."

"Oh yes, we have," he returned. "But a visitor quite as much above suspicion as my nephew. It is a young lady, a ward of mine, who has been with us now about four months. At present she has no home, having lost her mother just before coming here. She is merely with us as a temporary arrangement. Engaged to be married, in a month or six weeks' time she will be under the care and control of a husband."

"Rather soon," I remarked, "after so serious a loss as that of a mother."

"True. But it was her mother's own wish. Remember, she has no home. The wedding will be quite quiet."

"And you say this young lady is above suspicion?"

"As I am myself," he answered. "She is an easy-going, good-natured, jolly kind of girl; ready to do any one a good turn; with a tendency to be a little dashing, perhaps, as the term is; but I think without any real harm whatever."

"Is she well off?"

"Not very. She has not—in familiar terms—enough to live upon."

"Is the match she is about to make a good one?"

"At present I cannot say that it is, but I believe they have excellent prospects before them."

"Is she fond of jewellery?"

"I have heard her express great partiality for such things—diamonds and other ornaments. Believe me, Mr. Greenhill, she is altogether above suspicion."

"Very well, sir," I replied, dropping the subject. For in truth, I also, having more than doubts in another quarter, was quite willing to believe him. "I have told you," I continued, "your chief reason for refusing to believe that the room is visited at night—that it would attach guilt to your nephew. Am I not right?"

"It is one reason, I confess," replied Mr. Cashal. "If that could possibly be true—which I refuse to credit—it would break my wife's heart. She has no child and has taken a passionate liking to her nephew. He is worthy of all affection."

"To what other reason do you refer, sir?"

"To the fact of there being no duplicate to the lock, and of the key being in my possession—under my pillow—throughout the night."

"There is no other means of access to the room?"

"The windows; and the chimney," pointing to each respectively, with a half smile. "We have passed the age of witches on broomsticks, though I am sometimes inclined to think they are coming back to us."

"Are you a heavy sleeper at night?"

"Remarkably so. A cannon ball would scarcely waken me. To this fact I ascribe the wonderful amount of work I am able to accomplish during the day."

"And Mrs. Cashal?"

"Strange to say, she is equally so. We are both remarkably sound sleepers."

"Then, sir, it is accounted for. The key is abstracted during your sleeping hours. Some one enters your room, takes it from under your pillow, and when they have accomplished their purpose, replace it in the same way."

The manager smiled; a self-satisfied, secure kind of smile.

"The law of matter, Mr. Greenhill, forbids the supposition of people in human form passing through substance—wood and bricks. For some time past I have bolted my door. Impossible for any one to enter."

Baffled again. The mystery was certainly widening. I began to feel that it might not be quite so easy to fathom as it had seemed at first sight.

Let us briefly resume the facts.

Here was a room in a well-guarded house, to which no one but the manager at any time had access. By day and by night the key was not loosed from his own keeping. There was no chance of a duplicate key, as had been proved by the change made in the locks. (Here the manager had shown more sense and foresight than in his absurd dread of entering the room until one o'clock in the day.) Every one in the house seemed above suspicion. Yet this room, apparently so secure, was deliberately and systematically entered on various occasions, and articles of value stolen from it. The only probable solution at present apparent, was that the key was taken from under the pillow, at night, during the heavy slumbers of Mr. and Mrs. Cashal: but this supposition was put down by the fact of their bedroom door being bolted against all intrusion.

The room undoubtedly was entered; either during the dark hours of the night, or between the hours of ten and one in the day. In the former case the robbery must be committed by a member of Mr. Cashal's household: in the latter, suspicion might further point to one of the bank clerks.

In my own mind the matter was already settled beyond doubt.

The room was entered at night. The mysterious visitor was William Hawthorn, Mrs. Cashal's nephew. I had felt certain of it from the first moment: I now felt doubly so. His signs of guilt in the morning had been unmistakable: his conscience was evidently accusing him: my sudden appearance—knowing as he did my profession—brought his crime and its possible consequences too vividly before him for concealment.

What could be his motive? And how did he effect an entrance into the room?

The first question was capable of many answers which will suggest themselves as easily to the reader as they did to me. The second query, it must be admitted, was puzzling. At this moment the mode of entrance could not be explained in any possible manner. In my own mind the criminal was fixed, but at present I would spare Mr. Cashal. He would never consent to believe or entertain such an opinion without proof. His faith in his nephew—evidently misplaced—was so strong and blind, that it could not be lightly shaken. The task to be accomplished was to obtain this proof.

"Now, sir," I said, "you have placed this matter in my hands. You know me well enough to be sure that I never do or suggest a thing without some motive. I must therefore insist upon all suggestions being carried out to the letter. In my own mind there is already formed the links of a chain which have only to be bound together, and I believe that the affair will then stand out clearly before you. But your help and assistance will be required to some extent. In the first place let me ask—Have you confided this matter to any one beyond me? Does any other person know of the robbery? of the strange entrances into the room? of my interview with you to-night?"

"No one in the world but my wife," replied the manager. "I am able fully to rely upon her discretion. She has been the true partner of all my cares and sorrows. In matters of business even, her counsel has often been of great service to me. She has known of this from the beginning. It has baffled her as much as it has baffled me. Almost from the first she urged me to send for you: she wished to have been present now, but I preferred not. The substance of the interview I shall repeat to her presently."

This was so far satisfactory. Had the matter been known to many the difficulties of tracing it out would have been materially augmented.

"You have not spoken of it to Mr. William Hawthorn?"

"Not one syllable. I am certain he has no idea that such a thing is taking place. I would not have him know it."

Evidently his belief in his nephew would require more than slight proof before it was shaken.

A long silence ensued, given by me to consideration. I dwelt on the matter and endeavoured to view it in twenty different aspects. Running through the simple facts over and over again, I could only come each time to the same conclusion. The case was devoid of intricacies to a great extent. Many cases to be unravelled were as full of these intricacies and windings and dovetailings as the web of a weaver's loom: one had to be continually going in and out, backwards and forwards, crossing and recrossing like to a lady's needle over her mysterious silken broidery. But here to a great degree, all was plain and straightforward; and one mystery only had to be cleared away.

There was to consider the best mode of action: the first link to be taken up. After a quarter of an hour's silence and thought I had made up my mind as to the course to be pursued.

"I think I see a way out of the wood," I then remarked. "It will require your help, sir. In the first place you must do me the honour of inviting me to lunch with you to-morrow. Let no one be present but Mrs. Cashal and Mr. William Hawthorn—and your ward."

"With pleasure," he replied. "Though I do not follow you. I cannot see how this is to advance us."

"Be good enough to leave the issue in my hands, sir. If you wish to

account for my presence to your nephew, let him think that I am doing a little bank business for you and the partners. By the way—are the bank books all right? Have no errors crept in anywhere? are there no discrepancies between the cash and the balances?”

“None whatever,” replied the manager. “That would be a matter for very speedy investigation. There is no possibility of error.”

In a few moments I was quietly walking back through the streets, pondering over the interview. People were streaming out of the theatres. I had no conception our interview had lasted so long. The best thing to be done at that hour was to go to bed and sleep upon it.

The next day at one o'clock precisely, I was once more standing before the private door of the great banking house of Oliver and West. Again, as if by magic, my summons was responded to. As I walked through the long tessellated corridor, Mr. Cashal came out of the head partner's room, and together we went up the staircase.

Mrs. Cashal, her nephew, and Miss Arlington were already in the dining-room. It was a room large, square, and lofty, with one single, large window to your left as you entered. Opposite the window was a splendidly carved, massive oaken sideboard. Opposite the door but more to the middle was the fire-place: and opposite the fire-place a dead wall, the door, and a long row of green morocco chairs in oaken frames, also magnificently carved.

Mrs. Cashal first bowed, then shook hands with me, and in a few moments we had all sat down to the table.

I cannot say that my impressions of Miss Arlington were very favourable, though she struck me at first sight as being one of the most beautiful girls I had ever seen. She sat opposite to me, next to Mr. William Hawthorn, their backs to the fire-place; Mr. Cashal sat with his back to the window, Mrs. Cashal facing him. I was thus able to notice Miss Arlington very distinctly. But the beauty of the face was marred by a boldness of expression that to me was almost forbidding: her manner of laughing and talking struck one as being a little too free. She was evidently a daring girl, capable of going through a great deal. But my attention was directed less to her than to Mr. William Hawthorn, who to me was an object of greater interest, and far greater suspicion. My work did not lie with Miss Arlington.

No servants were in the room. The lunch was simple but well appointed, and we waited on ourselves. The conversation turned upon indifferent subjects: topics of the day. Last night's division in the House: the late accident on the London and Overbury Railway, which had set quivering the nerves of all sensitive people: the failure of a gigantic house that had ruined thousands, but with whom, happily, the firm of Oliver and West had for some time past ceased all dealings.

The conversation was chiefly carried on by Mrs. Cashal and myself. Mr. William Hawthorn was very silent, only joining in with a short,

hasty remark if directly appealed to. Miss Arlington would now and then speak to him in her loud, laughing way, to which he scarcely responded. Mrs. Cashal spoke sensibly and fluently, but very quietly. She seemed grave and a little absent, which under the circumstances was easily accounted for. Her face, too, was paler than usual. Inwardly, my heart bled for the trouble that I knew was coming upon her. She was by nature a hard, proud, unsympathizing woman: with love only for her husband, and, as it now appeared, her nephew and adopted son.

By gentle gradations I turned the conversation upon a robbery that had lately taken place. This was also of some diamonds, amongst other things, and was so cleverly perpetrated that suspicion was baffled, and the world talked and speculated. Looking stedfastly at Mr. Hawthorn I pointedly asked him his opinion of the robbery: whether he could conceive any possible way in which it had been committed.

The suddenness of the question and its being directly addressed to him, evidently took him by surprise. He coloured up, and by a nervous movement of the hand, overturned his wine-glass: which luckily was almost empty.

He replied very shortly that he had not thought much upon the matter, and was not competent to form any conclusion.

"My dear William," said his uncle, "you mistake, or have forgotten our last night's conversation. At dinner we talked of scarcely anything else, and it struck me that you threw out several very clear-sighted, sensible suggestions."

"Sleep most likely has banished the matter from Mr. Hawthorn's thoughts," I remarked quietly; for his embarrassment could no longer serve any purpose. And the conversation turned to another topic.

Miss Arlington was the first to leave the room. Without ceremony, but with a good-natured sort of intimation that she had work to do upstairs, she disappeared. Mr. Hawthorn soon followed her out, and Mr. Cashal for some minutes was also absent. Mrs. Cashal and I were left alone.

The door was no sooner closed behind them than she turned to me with emotion.

"Mr. Greenhill," she observed, a proud ring in her hushed tones, "I know not your motive in desiring to lunch with us to-day; but I beg and implore of you to use your best endeavours to fathom this unaccountable mystery. It is affecting my husband's health, and is affecting me also. All that touches him, touches me: everything that gives him anxiety, causes me no less pain and trouble."

"Madam," I replied, "this matter shall receive my best thought and attention. I make little doubt of almost immediate success. Had Mr. Cashal himself been more energetic, he would probably have

solved the mystery long ago. Had he, for instance, caused the room to be systematically watched——"

"Exactly what I proposed," she interrupted. "But he would not. *He would not.* He could not see it in that light: he believed such a course would inevitably be found out, and detection be thereby thwarted. At last I persuaded him to send for you. I know that it could not be in better hands. But for his sake and for mine, I pray you bring the matter to a speedy close."

I had scarcely time to assure her of my warmest and closest attention, when the manager re-entered the room. Mrs. Cashal at once rose from her seat, and with a somewhat stiff but polite bow, she took her departure.

"And now, Mr. Greenhill," said he, "has the last hour answered your expectations?"

"Fully and completely, sir."

"You begin to have something to work upon?"

"I have had that from the first, Mr. Cashal."

"And what are your conclusions? To whom—if to any one—do your suspicions point?"

Assuredly he knew what the answer would be if given; but I withheld it. It was too evident that nothing—nothing—short of deliberate testimony would induce him to attach guilt to his nephew, and it was wiser to determine to say not a word until such evidence was forthcoming.

"Pardon me, sir. The time has not yet arrived for a reply. Suspicions I have, but suspicions go for nothing. When I am able to come to you with proof in my hand—proof that neither can be doubted nor contradicted—then your question shall have an answer."

"And how do you propose to obtain this proof?"

"I cannot tell. By a series of experiments perhaps. By only one experiment if the first should prove successful. To begin with, the room must be watched."

I was prepared for objection, but he made none.

"Be it so," he answered. "But I see great difficulties in the way. The house possesses no closet for concealment."

"I shall not be in the house," I answered. "That might possibly thwart my purpose."

"You speak in riddles," said Mr. Cashal, somewhat irritably. "You propose to watch the room, and yet will not be in the house. How else will you do it?"

"In this manner, sir. Yesterday morning I perceived some empty chambers to be let over the way. They look right in upon your own private room. There could not be a better place to serve the end we have in view. I will take these rooms. Night after night, unknown to any one but you—and Mrs. Cashal if you like to tell her—I will

take up my station at this watch-tower: and admitting my supposition to be correct—that the room is entered at night—I shall ere very long, probably discover the mysterious intruder. But even then there will remain much to be done.”

Mr. Cashal approved of the plan, and shortly after I left the bank.

The next thing was to secure the room. About six o'clock in the evening I went down and rang the bell. It was answered by a middle-aged woman who lived on the premises and had the letting of the floors.

“Yes, sir,” she said, in answer to my query: “two rooms on the second floor to let. That is, if they are not taken already.”

“How—not taken? The bills are still up.”

“They are, sir. But a gentleman came after them this morning, and half took them. I promised to keep them over until five o'clock.”

“And it is now past six. The time has expired. What's the rent?”

“By the week or quarter, sir?”

“By the week.”

“In that case I should have to put in the furniture. It would be a pound more. Two pounds, ten.”

“Very well. I will give you three, provided I can come in at once.”

The matter was soon settled. I ordered her to put in only such furniture as I detailed, and then spoke a few quiet words to her: up in the room itself.

“Mrs. Wilks,” I observed, “I have one caution to give you. Whatever I do here, whatever you may happen to think strange about me, you must keep to yourself. Do not even mention that you have such a lodger on the premises. I may as well tell you that I belong to the Detective Police Force. Let me once find you whispering one syllable about me or my occupations; once find you disobeying my injunctions, and it will go hard with you.”

And by the woman's face I saw that I had said enough. She was to be trusted.

That night I took up my station. From twelve o'clock until seven any one able to peer into the darkness of the room might have seen a pair of eyes steadily fixed upon the opposite house, from which they seldom had occasion to wander. I had made up my mind that between the hours of midnight and six o'clock the room was generally entered, and that only during that period of time would it be necessary to be on guard.

The first night passed away in one unbroken monotony. Mr. Cashal's private room was not entered. So for six consecutive nights. I began to grow impatient. My project seemed to be failing. The next morning I called on the manager. He looked up quickly.

“No news, sir,” I said, on entering.

“I could have told you that,” he returned. “The room has not been entered since our last interview. At least I have missed nothing.”

"For a very good reason, perhaps. During the past week has there been anything worth taking?"

"Nothing," he answered. "I have carefully abstained from leaving out anything of value."

"Then for this one night, Mr. Cashal, change your plan. Leave on your desk, say a bag of fifty sovereigns. I don't know why I make the suggestion: as yet I cannot follow my own idea: but it is there and had better be acted upon. Will you agree to it?"

He promised, and I left him.

That night I commenced watching with renewed hope. I know not why my expectations were so raised, but that such was the case I could not conceal from myself.

The hours passed. Surrounding clocks struck twelve, one, two. About half-past two my hopes were beginning to grow fainter, when suddenly a gleam appeared opposite—in the manager's private room. It was as if the door had been pushed gently open, throwing upon the wall a narrow strip of light, reflected apparently from a bright lamp. Then a pause.

My heart beat faster than usual. At last I was going to learn something; my suspicions were about to be confirmed; my plan was to prove triumphant.

With breathless eagerness I awaited the further opening of the door. I made no doubt of the form it would disclose. Already before my mind's eye, stood the vision of Mr. Hawthorn. I prepared carefully to note his actions.

The door was now gently pushed further open. Then as if in hesitation the midnight intruder turned round and a shadow was cast upon the wall.

A consciousness of failure rushed over me; a sense of remorse at having so surely fixed the crime upon the wrong head. As yet the person could not be seen. But the shadow on the wall proved to my astonished gaze beyond all possibility of doubt, that it did not and could not belong to Mr. William Hawthorn.

(To be concluded next month.)



THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

AT the foot of the Cevennes, near Alby, stands a ruinous country house, surrounded by the remains of a magnificent garden, whose rank luxuriance has covered walk and flower-bed; creeping in viney tendrils over broken walls and statues; choking the channels of the mountain spring that fed the mountain sides.

The desolation surrounding everything seems as much the work of neglect as time. There had been a fire in the turret, though wind and rain had blown and washed away its traces till the broken roof and shattered rafters looked scarcely blacker than the damp-stained walls of the main building. Solitude and desertion had hastened decay, and given up the once beautiful château to the bats and owls.

Hard by it is the hamlet of Beauvais; but between it and the ruin lives Pierre Boncour, an honest wool dealer, who carries his merchandize over the mountain road to Narbonne, after shearing time; leaving his pretty wife Elise to watch for his return, or console herself by chatting with little Nina, her maid, about her baby's rosy cheeks and dimples.

One day in autumn weather Elise had other business on hand; the country round about was singularly picturesque and lovely, and tourists often found their way to Madame Boncour's nice covered porch to beg a rest and lodging; but on this particular occasion there was a demand on her hospitality she scarcely found herself equal to, and she stood courtesying and smiling, yet looking perturbed and ill at ease in the presence of three young travellers, who begged permission to remain all night, that they might see the ruins in the splendour of the full moon, and sketch the scene under the tender, mellow light.

Two were artists; one a wanderer at his own pleasure, and all in gay spirits, and sufficiently well provided in money, since they made no stint in offering large payment for the required accommodation.

"It is not that I doubt your liberality," said the pretty Elise, blushing; "you are very good; yet ours is but a cottage, and a plain one, and my husband has gone to see a merchant in Narbonne."

"Yes, yes," said Duval, the spokesman of the party, "we see; you fear we may be too gay and boisterous; but it is not so, I assure you. We met at Alby, and, hearing there of the haunted château, determined to visit it. All along the way we have been in the most solemn mood, discussing only ghosts and goblins, and you will find us the gravest and quietest of guests."

Madame Boncour smiled still more, yet lost none of her disturbance of manner.

"It is not that I object to good spirits. Ah, no; but I have already received a—a person aged and weak, but once a soldier. Messieurs, you will forgive me if I fear that my poor place will scarcely serve you all. He came first, and the poor and distressed man claims my protection."

Duprez, the youngest and merriest of the three, on this advanced, and, assuring the young woman that they required only a plain meal and a place to sit in, gained admittance; declaring that he honoured the goodness of heart that made their hostess so loyal to her first guest, in spite of poverty and affliction.

Madame Boncour, having once received the strangers, put aside all objection, and made them at home, though she pointed to a door leading from the main apartment to an inner room, as if to convey the idea of secrecy, while she arranged chairs for the company.

"A poor soldier," said Duval, "is the guest of his nation. Madame, it tells well for your loyalty that you have given him the best, and makes what remains doubly pleasant to us."

"Ah, as to that," said the good woman, "let me not deceive you; this person, though curiously dressed in a bygone fashion, has gold, and is not averse to using it freely. He paid well for the privilege of remaining here in quiet—perfect quiet; he was particular as to that; and when I called him poor and distressed, it was not of bodily want I spoke."

She had carried on her conversation in a whisper; and still pointing towards the door, and nodding a great many times to intimate that it would be well to maintain that subdued tone, she went away to prepare supper.

When she returned to lay the cloth, she found the trio on the happiest terms, and all intent on the evening's adventure.

"He sleeps," she said, in allusion to her elder guest, whom she had evidently viewed from some secret place of espial. "He is exhausted from the travel, and very, very weak, poor soul!" And she sighed as she set the dishes in order.

"And now about the ghost at the château, madame," cried Duval, gayly. "Our curiosity is excited beyond endurance by the different versions of the story we received at the inn, and we beg you to set us right."

Madame Boncour looked flattered by the request. "I will tell you the tale as I had it from my mother," she began, "though I cannot hope to give it the grace or interest her words carried, for she was a beautiful narrator: but I will do my best." And she set her cap in order, smiling modestly.

"Beauvais belonged always to the de Beauvais, who lived in the château since the memory of any one in Alby. They were a noble family; very proud, and fond of the display and splendour of court life;

so Beauvais only saw them for the hunting season, and the steward who managed the grounds, and the notary who collected the rents knew more of the country house than its owners. My great-grandmother lived as maid with old Madame de Beauvais until the favourite valet of Monsieur Rupert, the young gentleman, married her, and then she settled in the village. Madame de Beauvais was more ambitious than her son; he loved his people, and would have been content to stay among them; but his mother found him a bride in a great lady of the court—a favourite of the queen—who could not endure such dulness and seclusion.

“After the birth of twin daughters she went back to Paris, never to see the château again, and there she lived grandly till the Revolution came and the frightful guillotine cut short her splendour. Poor Monsieur Rupert! Why they should have sacrificed him too, who was always the friend of his people, the villagers could not tell, and so they mourned for him; and every one felt sad for his white-haired mother, when, after years had passed and the days of peace and the Consulate come, she returned to the old home where her boy had played when he was the bright-faced darling of the village.

“My grandmother was a girl then, and she went, as her mother had done before her, to be maid to the young ladies of Beauvais, the twin beauties, who were now its heiresses.

“One was fair, the other very dark. The blonde *Hélène* was cold and proud like her queenly mother whose name she bore. The brunëtte, sweet *Désirée*, her father’s counterpart, possessed his nature, and seemed all gentle life and beaming gaiety. *Hélène* was her grandmother’s favourite. Although people had said it had broken her heart to lose her son by such a frightful death—and it certainly changed her appearance by making her hair snow white—she preferred to lavish her pride and fondness on the one who least resembled him; leaving *Désirée*, his second self, to be the darling of the tenantry, as her father used to be.

“Madame de Beauvais had risked her life for the sake of both children. Her daughter-in-law, a staunch aristocrat, tempted death in her adherence to royalty, and her husband followed her to the scaffold in his futile efforts to save her. *Hélène* and *Désirée* were in confinement when their grandmother, in the disguise of a country woman, gained access to them by bribing their keeper, and with indomitable courage and endurance won her way to sea, and so got them safely off to England.

“There they lived in obscure poverty, and *Hélène* being the stronger of the two, learned to make plaster figures and sell them for their bread.

“My grandmother thought that the memory of this time of trial and coarse experience increased the haughtiness of the beautiful blonde when restored to the wealth and power from which she had been so

painfully estranged. She certainly was a proud beauty, since every one knew her by the title ; and her imperious way with her admirers gave her the reputation of heartlessness—though it did not seem to lessen her charm among them.

“ Désirée was all sweetness and childish gaiety ; people loved her as soon as they looked at her : but Hélène's beauty and lofty grace compelled admiration even where her coldness stifled affection.

“ They did not go to court. The Republic had no attractions for the daughters of royalists ; yet they had lovers. And Beauvais was a gay place in the season ; the fêtes, and drives, and balls, and hunting parties, all attended by good company, such as its mistress had the art to draw together and make Hélène its queen.

“ In the village lived a man called Provost, a notary, and madame's best adviser in all business points. He had been faithful to the family interests in the past ; had protected the château by courage and strategy combined, in the terrible days when an armed mob marched, carrying desolation in its path, from Marseilles to Alby.

“ His son Armand, a handsome fellow, had gone to England with papers and means of return for the exiled family, and, after rendering them all necessary assistance, had remained behind, travelling and enlarging his experience by sights in the new country.

“ As soon as he reappeared in Beauvais, my grandmother noticed a change in Mademoiselle Hélène ; prouder and colder than before, she became infinitely more capricious, with as many moods as there were hours in the day. Often she would ride out the queen of a gay party of devoted cavaliers and ladies, the leading spirit of mirth and adventure ; but, meeting on the way Armand Provost, and receiving from him a distantly respectful salutation, would lose her merriment, and become thoughtful and distraught, so that the whole gaiety of the company would be eclipsed as by a sudden cloud.

“ One hour she would encourage, the next reject a suitor ; and had she not been beautiful beyond compare, and an heiress too, she might have found herself deserted. As it was, her caprice only stimulated her admiration, and she was flattered and sued to by them all.

“ Sweet Désirée was no coquette. She gave her heart to a young count who sought her hand. At the marriage settlement a grand entertainment was held at Beauvais, and the old count, her lover's father, brought a train of gentlemen with him that made it like a court. That night my grandmother found out a secret she never forgot to her dying day. The upper garden was lighted with coloured lamps, and there was dancing in the great pavilion ; all the maids had permission to look on after supper, and she had told her lover he might meet her at the outer gate, and have a peep at the magnificent scene. The château stands on terraces, you must know, messieurs, and has an inner garden and a lawn. Outside of this is a stone wall, with orna-

mental stairs and pillared porches, and then below are beautiful grounds and fountains, with shrubberies and groves and flowery hedges, that used to be famous all the country round for their luxuriant beauty. It was through the path leading to one of these entrances my grandmother glided as softly as she could, and slipping past groups of loiterers, all unseen, went down the stone steps to where a myrtle grove bordered a splashing fountain. Above the falling of the water she heard a passionate, pleading voice, and so she crouched in, hiding in the shadow of the stone balustrade; not meaning to listen, *messieurs*, you know, but merely being anxious to avoid detection.

"It was Armand Provost who spoke. And, as she guessed from the tone, it was of love; and for his heart he pleaded.

"He always seemed something far beyond the people of the village, although he lived among them; and a handsomer man had never stepped inside the chapel than the notary's son. So, as she heard the beautiful, fervent words he uttered, it made her own heart melt in pity, and she wished it might have been her lot to make him happy.

"He seemed to be prostrate at the feet of his idol; and yet, though he abased himself before her, there was some faint hope in his wild prayer.

"*'It cannot be,'* he said, *'that any one inspiring such devotion remains unconscious of it wholly. I have adored you silently, yet felt there was a voice in my dumb worship you could not forego, that told you of a slave who threw his life in the very dust at your feet, and was content to live or die, as you might will it.'*

"This was the way he pleaded. After an instant's silence came a bursting sob for his reply—a sob that seemed to rend the heart it came from; and by the sound, she knew it was Mademoiselle Hélène, the proud, cold beauty of Beauvais, who listened to the notary's son.

"My grandmother was paralyzed with amazement; but Armand seemed to find another meaning in the answer. Softly she rose above the stone rail of the stair, and, scarcely breathing, peeped over. Then she was petrified; and, losing all fear of discovery in her astonishment, remained staring, till at a rustle of the boughs she dived again beneath the shadow of the balustrade, and drew a long, deep breath.

"Armand stood close beside her under the shining leaves, and Mademoiselle Hélène, subdued and tearful, lay in his arms receiving caresses.

"I have told you that the blonde beauty of Beauvais was capricious. You will not be surprised, then, when I go on to relate that while my grandmother, fluttered and palpitating, could not decide whether to go back or forward, her mistress burst suddenly into a torrent of self-reproaches; saying that she was a mad idiot, and many other frantic words. Then flinging off her lover's entreating hands in passionate pride and frenzy, she fled up the steps, unconscious of her maid's pre-

sence, and deaf to Armand's prayers. The next moment, Mademoiselle Hélène was dancing with an Italian prince, the most distinguished guest that Beauvais ever had received, and old Madame de Beauvais' determined choice for her fair niece's husband.

"After that night my grandmother held a secret key that opened every mystery in her young mistress's conduct.

"Before this time the twin sisters had occupied a suite of rooms in the centre of the château; but, even while the guests remained, Hélène claimed two smaller chambers in the turret, and removed thither. Then she got materials and set to work privately at the old occupation at which she had wrought, when, but a child, in London, she was forced to take a woman's part in life.

"No one knew what she was doing; even from my grandmother she carefully hid away the thing at which she laboured. All day long she was the gayest figure on the lawn, dancing and leading games and jests as she had never done before, so that people changed their minds about her pride, and said she really was as good and charming as her sister Désirée.

"Her grandmother seemed quite enchanted, and began to smile again as she had never done since the terrible days in Paris. The ambition of her life was near its fulfilment. Désirée was already betrothed to a noble, and the foreign prince was only waiting for an opportunity to lay his title at Hélène's feet.

"It came in a curious way, and gave my grandmother some trouble. She was devoted to Mademoiselle Hélène, despite her proud reserve, and the lady trusted her entirely, as you will see.

"'You must go to the notary's for me, Christine,' she said to her. 'It is some question of our family history I would know; and his son can search it out more readily than his father, being the cleverer of the two, they tell me. What is his name? Ah, yes; Armand. Well, tell Armand I want to see him about some business before he goes away.'

"'Goes away, Mademoiselle?'

"'Yes,' cried Mademoiselle Hélène, impatiently. 'I merely speak of what I have heard.'

"So Armand received the message and came, and the lady met him at the side entrance and took him into a little room under her chamber in the turret, and closed the door. Of course my grandmother desired to know the subject of the interview; she had a tender heart and felt for the young lawyer; but her mistress did not mean that she should have the opportunity. No sooner did she return from Beauvais than she sent her to trim crooks with ribbons for a masquerade of shepherds to be held upon the lawn that night.

"'Twas time to dress her mistress when the task was done, and so she ran to do it, hoping to find something lingering in her face to tell the feeling with which she had parted from Armand.

"She was not in her chamber, and she went below to find her. There she stayed with her lover still, but in such a strange fashion that it made my grandmother pause and wonder.

"The notary's son was sleeping heavily, his head fallen on the table beside which he sat, and Mademoiselle Hélène bent over him, busily fitting a mask of white clay to his features. Two glasses, one with wine scarcely tasted, the other fully drained, stood on a tray; and when she saw she had accomplished what she strove to do, and that the mask was suited to her wish, she caught the glass and swallowed the drink hastily, as if she needed strength.

"The expression of her face warned my grandmother she had best retire. She tried to close the door noiselessly and do so, but seeing her lady stoop and passionately kiss the unconscious face whose copy she had taken, the peasant girl was wise enough to fly, leaving her mistress keeper of her secret.

"Just below she met the prince coming to find Hélène, and being confused, gave him such varying answers that he declared he would find her for himself.

"Fearing some encounter, she tried to stay him, but failing, followed till they came to the entrance of the château where she had brought Armand that morning.

"There stood Armand, half stupefied, and grasping the carved stone of the doorway for support; whilst Hélène, pale and strangely excited, tried to push him forth, urging him in a frantic whisper to be gone.

"Something in her appearance gave the prince the impression that the common fellow had been insolent to her, so he drew his sword and struck him violently. Armand fell without a word—it was my grandmother who screamed, and so made an uproar that brought the guests to the spot.

"When they came, the notary's son was already raised, and by the aid of the prince's valet borne away, while the prince himself, supporting Mademoiselle Hélène, whispered his love to her, and ardently besought her to be calm again.

"The little scene and its important ending was all the theme among the guests that night, but Hélène kept her chamber, and robbed the fête of half its brilliancy. Whatever was the cause of her seclusion, she kept it secret, and if ill, received no help from any. My grandmother, being anxious, watched and saw that the light burned all night within her chamber, and that her shadow moved about across the curtain.

"The next day the company went away, and, strange to say, the prince went with them, leaving his beautiful betrothed, who accepted him only on this condition: that for a year she held her freedom undisturbed, and if, when that time ended, he should still desire to claim her, she would await his coming.

"Every one in the village knew that Armand Provost had gone from Beauvais: my grandmother knew it best of all, for she had heard him tell her mistress, by the myrtles, that he would come again within the year if life were spared him, and a name worthy to offer her could be snatched out of death's jaws; and yet one night she had a terrible fright through seeing him, as she supposed, in the turret, in a little room, of which her mistress kept the key, and which by a strange chance was this night left unlocked. There he sat, his head leant over and his hair thrown back, leaving his beautiful forehead bare and cold in the soft moonlight.

"Trembling, the girl drew nearer, recognizing every feature, till suddenly she started to behold her mistress lying on the ground before her, clasping it with her arms; and then she knew the figure to be fashioned out of coloured clay, and saw that mademoiselle, though proud and cold, was an idolator.

"This is very sad, *messieurs*. My mother told me that when *her* mother repeated the story she would often weep as she recalled the prone form of the lofty lady, and remembered the dreary days and nights so spent in penance for her pride.

"*Désirée* wedded and went to Normandy. Old Madame de Beauvais seemed content, and shortly after the marriage died very quietly, and was laid in the chapel where all her race, except her darling son, had been buried. Her sister wished to come and bear *Hélène* company in her loneliness; but she refused, and the months went by until the year expired, and the prince came from Italy to claim her.

"My grandmother saw that something terrible oppressed her lady's mind as the time shortened, and a watchful agony kept her eyes fastened on the road—not the way people come from Marseilles, but Paris—for her titled lover came unheralded from the sea, while she watched for the city, to which Armand had gone to join the army.

"She met her betrothed quietly; and he found her more marvellously beautiful in mourning than in gay attire, and told her so; and many other rapturous things that gave her no delight; for when my grandmother would go to dress her to receive him, she would always find her in the secret chamber with her image.

"At last the day came before the one on which she had promised to receive the Italian as her husband. She had purposely delayed the coming of the guests till the last moment, and shut herself from the sight of every one that long, long day.

"With her eyes strained northward on the Paris road, she sat within her turret room, and when twilight was come she closed the curtain and shut herself up with her image.

"My grandmother until that night had slept in the small chamber just across the passage from her mistress, but was peremptorily commanded by the lady to go into the main building and occupy the bed-

room where they used to rest before the night Armand spoke his love under the myrtles.

"When they parted, mademoiselle was fully dressed, and would not accept her service, saying she meant to walk awhile, and then return and go to rest when she felt sleepy.

"The maid watched from her window and saw her wander down among the myrtles near the fountain, and after some time come again and go up to her chamber. There was no light, and so she thought, 'Poor lady, she is wearied and will sleep.'

"It was near morning when she woke to a horrible uproar, and found the house in flames.

"A wild confusion reigned supreme, and no one knew where the fire began, or how it spread until the peasants from their homes in the surrounding fields discovered it was the turret only, and did their best to save it.

"They worked like giants, and carried a perfect flood of water from the main roof to the tower, so that the greedy flame was stayed at last. And, heartsick with dread, they mounted ladders trembling against charred and smoking beams, to look for Mademoiselle Hélène, whom no one had seen since the alarm.

"Ah, gentlemen, it was terrible: they found the clay figure discoloured, but perfect; but the beauty of Beauvais was in ashes. My grandmother said she had chosen that death to preserve her pride, by carrying the proof of her weakness out of the world with her. But it remained; and now its ghost is seen on the deserted turret—it is seen where once it used to stand, and at his feet a suppliant lies, the shadow of the beautiful being who formed it as a monument of the folly of her pride."

"And we can see this, Madame Boncour?" cried Evremond.

"Listen, Duprez and Duval; it is something to have such a story verified."

"Assuredly, monsieur; others have done so, and why not you. But you must not forget our compact. Eat your supper quietly—here is Nina bringing it—and then rest till the moon rises, and you can see Beauvais in full beauty."

"Ah, you may be tranquil, madame; we will not forget your poor soldier, but promise to take our meal and express our ghostly criticism quietly, thanking you heartily for your story."

They had begun to do so, when she broke in upon them in something of excitement, crying: "Is it not mysterious! our soldier is gone. He was so weak he could scarcely totter when he came, and touched my heart with pity for his helpless age."

"I heard a stir while you were speaking," said Evremond, who was nearest the door. "Is there any egress from the chamber?"

"To be sure—the window opening on the porch; but it's so strange; so very strange!"

The travellers were less lively in their interest in the old man. Being

intent on their own midnight adventure, they resumed their discussion on the ghost more earnestly, being now unchecked by the dread of disturbing the sick soldier.

As soon as the moon began to rise they were on their way: and, after following the road for a few rods, struck into a grass-grown carriage path that wound over a rising ground to the great gate of the château, whose hinge, being broken, stood always ajar.

Their feet sank deep in the rank grass and weeds as they stole along, depressed by the nature of their expedition into a strangely solemn sense of the desolate decay around them.

The marble of the steps was broken and had crumbled in places, so that they tripped, and then started with beating hearts at the sound they made in stumbling. Suddenly they paused; here was the fountain dry as summer dust, and here the myrtles, choked with poisonous vines, dank with the night dew.

The stairway rose beneath the ornamental entrance to the upper terrace at their side, and Evremond whispered: "This is the spot at which the notary's son met her."

"And there is the turret with its broken roof and charred rafters," said Duval.

"And what is that at the window?" cried Duprez, in a different voice. The two first were simply hushed and serious, the last was alarmed and awe-struck.

All looked up, and there in the window, clearly defined against the moonlit sky, stood forth a moving figure.

"Come, let us go," cried Duval; and plunging headlong through the wet shrubbery, he drove the rusty gate aside, and was out in the open country and away from the ghostly influence of Beauvais before he spoke again. His companions, whether influenced by their own fears or his example, followed him.

"I do not sketch," said Evremond, "but I should prefer to take my next view of Beauvais by sunlight."

Madame Boncour was not surprised at their early return. She was so highly pleased to add another evidence to the ghostly reputation of the place of which she was so proud, that she kept them describing the scene over and over again. By and by it grew sufficient to explain their own fears, of which they had at first been inclined to feel ashamed; and they went to rest with something less of cowardice than they had been conscious of on their return.

They slept late next day, and on awakening found their breakfast prepared, though Nina alone presided over it.

Madame Boncour had been summoned to the village early, Nina said, and was there still.

While they yet lingered over their meal she returned. Her face was solemn, her manner subdued and even tearful.

"Messieurs," she said, "I have now a sequel to my story; the ghost of Beauvais is complete. The poor soldier I lodged was Armand Provost, returned from Barca after being carried thence from Egypt thirty years ago, and held in slavery by the Turks. He heard me narrating to you the history of his heart, and went to the turret of Beauvais to close it there. It was his figure you recognized last night among the broken timbers where the lady kept his image. Had you remained longer you might have succoured him when he fell."

"Ah!" cried Duval, springing to his feet, "did he then fall from such a height? Good heavens, what a shock to so old and worn a frame."

"Let us go, we may assist him even now," exclaimed the kind Duprez.

"His moans were heard by the children who take the sheep to the hills," said Madame Boncour. "There are some of the Provosts still left at Beauvais; he was well attended."

"But we can speak to him!"

"No, monsieur; I told you the story was complete. Armand Provost died at sunrise in the ruins of Mademoiselle Hélène's turret."



THE COUPE D'HÉBÉ.*

I.

Will then the past be naught?—Shall we forget

All that has been—joy, strife, and victory—

When we have tasted of the charmed cup,

And new-fed fire leaps laughing to the eye?

Is it eternal youth never to know

The wealth of wisdom which long years should bring?

Never to gather harvest of our days,

To live alone in budding breath of spring?

Is it to wear for aye the rose of health,

The bloom of beauty—dawn's too dazzling smile;

To feel the blood rush hotly through the veins;

And let love's whisp'rings ev'ry hour beguile?

If this be all that Hebe's cup can give—

Far-famed though it may be—

Let the gods quaff it on th' Olympian hill;

Let who may seek in it their fleshly will;

I'll turn aside, waiting for choicer gifts;

This gift may pass for me.

* The reader will also perceive allusion to the favourite rose bearing this title.

II.

Sweet summer darling, blushing through and through
With rosy warmth and brightness—radiant queen!

Have I not been

Thy ardent worshipper from year to year?

Have I not held thy rare perfections dear,

And praised them with the rest—more than the rest?

But now I know

Mere sensuous beauty is not all in all;

Nor he most blest

Who gathers most of roses, fair as blow,

Who basks for ever in June's light and love.

Except a seed should fall

Into the ground and die—save for the frost and snow—

Where were the promised fruit—the waving corn above?

III.

Peerless Coupe d'Hébé! whisper all thy tale

Into my list'ning ear; flood all my sense

With thy seductive fragrance: only leave

My soul unharmed by the soft influence

Thy splendours typify.

Pass, golden cup, with magic nectar brimmed!

Youth is not all of life; nor is life all fulfilled

When heart, and brain, and pulse, are surely stilled.

Who wants eternity

Of incompleteness? What were earth, and earth's

Best blessings without consciousness of Heav'n?—

Flesh without spirit?—man apart from God?

Beneath the sod

Goes on the quick'ning process. How is giv'n

Fullness of life, but through Death's frowning gate?

Pass Hebe's cup! I calmly would await

Each change appointed to the highest end;

When the awakened body, glorified,

And the divided spirit, purified,

Shall once more blend.

EMMA RHODES.



THE SELF-CONVICTED.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

I.

IT was a wild, boisterous evening at the commencement of winter. The wind, howling in fearful gusts, swept the earth as with a whirlwind, booming and rushing with a force seldom met with in an inland county. The rain descended in torrents, pattering against the window-panes, especially against those of a solitary farm-house, situated several miles from the city of Worcester. In fact, it seemed a battle between the wind and the rain which should treat the house most roughly, and the wind had the best of it. It roared in the chimneys, it shook the old gables on the roof, burst open the chamber casements, and fairly unseated the weathercock from its perch on the barn. The appearance of the dwelling would seem to denote that it belonged to one of the middle class of agriculturists. There was no finery about it, inside or out, but plenty of substance. A large room, partaking partly of the parlour, partly of the hall, and somewhat of the kitchen, was the general sitting-room; and in this apartment, on this same turbulent Friday evening, sat, knitting by fire-light, a middle-aged lady, homely, but very neat, in her dress.

"Eugh!" she shuddered, as the wind roared and the rain dashed against the windows, which were only protected by inside shutters, "what a night it is! I wish to goodness Robert would come home."

Laying down her knitting, she pushed the logs together on the hearth, and was resuming her employment, when a quiet, sensible-looking girl, apparently about one or two and twenty, entered. Her features were not beautiful, but there was an air of truth and good-nature pervading them more pleasing than beauty.

"Well, Jane," said the elder lady, looking up, "how does she seem now?"

"Her ankle is in less pain, mother," was the reply, "but it appears to me that she is getting feverish. I gave her the draught."

"A most unfortunate thing!" ejaculated Mrs. Armstrong. "Benjamin at home ill, and now Susan must get doing some of his work, that she has no business to attempt, and falls down the loft, poor girl, and sprains her ankle. Why could she not have trusted to Wilson? I do believe," broke off Mrs. Armstrong, abruptly, and suspending her knitting to listen, "that your father is coming. The wind howls so that one can scarcely hear, but it sounds to me like a horse's hoofs."

"I do not think it is a horse," returned Jane. "It is more like some one walking round to the house-door."

* An old story reprinted.

"Well, child, your ears are younger than mine; it may be as you say."

"I hope it is not Darnley!" cried Jane, involuntarily.

"Jane," rebuked her mother, "you are very obstinate to persist in this dislike of a neighbour. A wealthy young man with a long lease of one of the best farms in the county over his head is not to be sneezed at. What is there to dislike in James Darnley?"

"I—I don't know that there is anything particular to dislike in him," hesitated Jane, "but I cannot see what there is to like."

"Don't talk foolishly, but go and open the door," interposed Mrs. Armstrong. "You hear the knocking."

Jane made her way to the house-door, and, withdrawing the chain and bolt, a rush of wind, a shower of rain, and a fine-looking young man sprang in together. The latter clasped Jane round the waist, and—if the truth must be told—brought his lips into contact with hers.

"Hush, hush, Ronald," she whispered; "my mother is in the hall alone; what if she should hear!"

"I will fasten the door," was all the answer she received. And Jane disengaged herself, and walked towards the hall.

"Who is it?" asked Mrs. Armstrong, as her daughter reappeared. "Mr. Darnley?"

"It is Ronald Payne," answered Jane, in a timid voice.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Armstrong, in a very short tone. "Get those shirts of your father's, Jane, and look to the buttons; there they lie, on the sideboard. And light the candles: you cannot see to work by fire-light."

"How are you, Mrs. Armstrong?" inquired the young man, in a cheerful tone, as he entered and seated himself on the opposite side of the large fireplace. "What an awful night! I am not deficient in strength, but it was as much as I could do to keep my feet coming across the land."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Armstrong, plying her knitting-needles with great energy; "you would have been better at home."

"Home is dull for me now," was the answering remark of Ronald Payne. "Last winter my poor mother was alive to bear me company, but this, I have no one to care for."

"Go up-stairs, Jane, and see if Susan has dropped asleep," interrupted Mrs. Armstrong, who did not seem to be in the most pleasant humour. "and as you will have the beds to turn down to-night, you can do that."

Jane rose, and departed on her errand.

"And lonely my home is likely to be," continued Ronald, "until I follow good example and marry."

"It would be the very thing for you, Mr. Payne," replied the lady. "Why don't you set about it?"

"I wish I dare. But I fear it will take time and trouble to win the wife I should like to have."

"There's a great deal of trouble in getting a wife—a good one; as for the bad ones, they are as plentiful as blackberries. There have been two or three young blades wanting to be after Jane," continued the shrewd Mrs. Armstrong, "but I put a stop to them at once, for she is promised already."

"Promised!" echoed Ronald.

"Of course she is. Her father has promised her to Mr. Darnley; and a good match it will be."

"A wretched sacrifice," exclaimed Payne, indignantly. "Jane hates him."

"How do you know that?" demanded Mrs. Armstrong, sharply.

"I hate him too," continued the excited Ronald. "I wish he was a thousand miles away."

And the conversation continued in this strain until Jane returned, when another loud knocking at the house-door was heard above the wind.

"Allow me to open it," cried Mr. Payne, starting up; and a second stranger entered the sitting-room.

"How are you, Mr. Darnley? I am very glad to see you," was the cordial salutation of Mrs. Armstrong, "Come to the fire; and, Jane, go and draw a tankard of ale. Susan has managed to sprain her ankle to-night, and cannot stir a step," she explained. "An unlucky time for it to happen, for our indoor man went home ill three days ago, and is not back yet. Did you ever know such weather?"

"Scarcely," returned the new comer. "As I rode home from the fair, I thought the wind could not be higher, but it gets worse every hour."

"You have been to the fair, then?"

"Yes. I had a heavy lot of stock to sell. I saw Mr. Armstrong there; he was buying, I think."

"I wish he would make haste home," was Mrs. Armstrong's answer.

"It is not a desirable night to be out in."

"A pretty prospect for going to Worcester market to-morrow!" observed Darnley.

"But need you go?"

"I shall go if it rains cats and dogs," was the gentleman's reply.

"My business to-day was to sell stock—to-morrow, it will be to buy."

Jane entered with the silver tankard, its contents foaming above its brim like a mountain of snow, and placed it on a small, round table between the two young men. They sat there, sipping the ale occasionally, now one, now the other, but angry words passed continually between them. Darnley was fuming at the evident preference Jane accorded to his rival, and Payne fretted and chafed at Darnley's suit

being favoured by Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong. They did not quite come to a quarrel, but it was little short of it, and when they left the house together, it was in anything but a cordial humour.

"Jane, what can have become of your father?" exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong, as the door closed upon the two young men. "It is hard upon ten o'clock. How late it will be for him to go to Wilson's: he will have, as it is, to knock him up, for the man must have been in bed an hour ago."

Now it is universally known that farmers in general, even the most steady, have an irresistible propensity to yield to one temptation—that of taking a little drop too much on a fair or market night. Mr. Armstrong was not wholly exempt from this failing, though it was rare indeed that he fell into the snare. For a twelvemonth, at the least, had his family not seen him the worse for liquor; yet, as ill-luck would have it, he came in on this night stumbling and staggering, his legs reeling one way, and his head flying another. How he got home was a mystery to Mrs. Armstrong; and to himself also, when he came to his senses. As to making him comprehend that an accident had befallen Susan, and that in consequence he was wanted to go and tell some one of their out-door men to be at the house early in the morning, it was not to be thought of. All that could be done with him was to get him upstairs—a feat that was at length accomplished.

"This is a pretty business, Jane!" cried the indignant Mrs. Armstrong. "You will be obliged to milk the cows in the morning, now."

"Milk the cows!" returned Jane, aghast at the suggestion.

"What else can be done? Neither you nor I can go to tell Wilson at this time of night, and in such a storm; and the cows must be milked. You can milk, I suppose?"

"Oh, mother!" was Jane's remonstrance.

"I ask if you can milk?" repeated Mrs. Armstrong, impatiently—she was by far too much put out to speak otherwise.

"I have never tried since I was a child," was Jane's reply. "I sometimes used to do it then, for pastime."

"Then, my dear, you must do it once for use. It would be a mercy," continued the excited lady, "if all the public-houses and their drinkables were at the bottom of the sea."

Jane Armstrong was a girl of sound sense and right feeling. Unpalatable as the employment was, she nevertheless saw that it was her duty, under the present circumstances, to perform it; so she quietly made up her mind to the task, and requested her mother to call her at the necessary hour in the morning.

They were highly respectable and respected people, Robert Armstrong and his wife, though not moving in the sphere exclusive to gentlefolks. Jane had been brought up well. Perfectly conversant with all household duties, her education in other respects would scarcely have dis-

graced the first lady in the county—for it must be remembered that education then was not what it is now—and her parents could afford to spend money upon their only child. Amply she repaid them by her duty and affection. One little matter only did they disagree upon, and that not openly. Very indignant was Mrs. Armstrong at Ronald Payne's presuming to look up to her, and exceedingly sore did she feel with Jane for not checking this presumption. But she could urge nothing against Ronald, excepting that he was a poor, rather than a rich man, and that the farm he rented was regarded as an unproductive one. His pretensions created a very ill-feeling towards him in Mrs. Armstrong's mind, for she believed, that but for him, her daughter would consent to marry the wealthy James Darnley, and so become mistress of his splendid farm.

Before it was light the next morning Jane left the house with her milk-pail. Only the faintest glimmer of dawn was appearing in the east. There was no rain, and the wind had dropped to a calm; but it was a cold, raw morning. Jane wrapped her woollen shawl closely round her, and made good speed.

The field in which the cow-sheds were situated was bounded on the left by a lonely lane, leading from the main road. It branched off in various directions, passing some of the farm-houses. Jane had reached the field, and was putting down her milk-pail, when a strange noise on the other side of the hedge caused her to start and listen.

A violent struggle, as for life or death, was taking place. A voice that was certainly familiar to her, twice called out "Murder!" with a shriek of agony, but heavy blows, seemingly from a club or other formidable weapon, soon silenced it, and some one fell to the earth amidst moans and groans of anguish.

"Lie there, and be still!" burst forth another voice, rising powerfully over the cries. "What! you are not finished yet! I have laid in wait for ye to a pretty purpose if ye be to escape me now. One! two! three!" and Jane shuddered and turned sick as she listened, for each sentence was followed by a blow upon the prostrate form. The voice was totally strange to Jane—one that she had never heard in her life—and shocking blasphemy was mingled with the words.

Ere silence supervened, Jane, half stupified with horror and fear, silently tore her thick shoes off her feet, leaving them where they were, in her agitation, and stole away on the damp path, gathering her clothes about her, so that not a sound should betray her presence to those on the other side. As she widened the distance between herself and that fearful scene, her speed increased; she flew, rather than ran, and entered her father's and mother's bedroom to fall senseless on the floor.

Later in the morning, when broad daylight had come, a crowd stood around the murdered man. The face was bruised and bloody, and the head had been battered to death; but there was no difficulty in recog-

nizing the features of James Darnley. His pockets were turned inside out; they had been rifled of their contents, and a thick, knotted stick, covered with blood and hair, lay by his side. It was supposed he had a heavy sum about him in his pockets, but all had been abstracted.

And now came a question, first whispered amongst the multitude, but repeated louder and louder by indignant voices.

"Who is the murderer?"

"Ronald Payne," was the answer, deliberately uttered by a bystander. "I have just heard it from Mrs. Armstrong's own lips. They were at her house last night quarrelling and contending, and she *knows* he is the murderer."

"Ronald Payne!" echoed the crowd, with one universal accent of surprise and incredulity.

"As God is my Judge," cried the unhappy young man—for he was also present—"I am innocent of this deed!"

"You have long been upon ill terms," retorted the before-mentioned bystander—and it may be remarked that he was an acquaintance of Payne's; had never borne anything but kind feeling towards him. Yet now, so gratifying is it to the vain display and pride of human nature to be mixed up with one of these public tales of horror, he suddenly became his vehement accuser. "Mrs. Armstrong says that you left her house bickering with each other; and she heard you assert, before he was present, that you hated him, and wished he was a thousand miles away."

"That is all true," answered Ronald, turning his clear eye to the crowd, who now began to regard him with doubt. "We *were* bickering one with the other at Mrs. Armstrong's last night; not quarrelling, but talking *at* each other; but no ill words passed between us after we left the house. We walked peaceably together, and I left him at his own door. I never set eyes upon him afterwards till I saw him here with you, lying dead."

Words of doubt, hints of suspicion, ran through the multitude, headed by the contumacious bystander: and Ronald Payne's cheeks, as he listened, burnt like fire.

"How can you think I would have a hand in such an awful deed!" he indignantly exclaimed. "Can you look in my face and believe me one capable of committing murder?"

"Faces don't go for nothing, sir," interposed the constable, Samuel Dodd, who had come bustling up and heard the accusation made; "we don't take 'em into *at*count in these matters. I am afeared, sir, it's my duty to put the ancuffs on you."

"Handcuffs on me!" exclaimed Ronald, passionately.

"You may be wanted, sir, at the crowner's quest, and perhaps at another tribunal after that. It is more than my office is worth to let you be at large."

"Do you fear I should attempt to run away?" retorted Ronald.

"Such steps have been heered on, sir," answered the constable; "and my office is give me, you see, to prevent such."

The idea of resistance rose irresistibly to the mind of Ronald Payne; but his better judgment came to his aid, and he yielded to the constable, who was calling on those around to help to secure him in the king's name—good old George III.

"I resign myself to circumstances," was his remark to the officer, "and will not oppose your performing what is your apparent duty. Yet, oh! believe me," he added, earnestly, "I am entirely innocent of this foul deed—as innocent as you can be. I repeat, that I never saw James Darnley after I left him at his own house last night; and far from quarrelling during our walk home, we were amicably talking over farming matters."

When the constable had secured his prisoner in the place known as the "lock-up," he made his way to Mr. Armstrong's, intensely delighted at all the excitement and stir, and anxious to gather every possible gossip about it, true or untrue. Such an event had never happened in the place since he was sworn in constable. In Farmer Armstrong's hall were gathered several people, Sir John Seabury, the landlord of that and the neighbouring farms, standing in the midst.

Sir John was an affable man, and, as times went, a liberal landlord. It happened that he was then just appointed high sheriff of Worcestershire for the ensuing year, his name having been the one pricked by the king.

When the constable entered, all faces were turned towards him. Several voices spoke, but Sir John's rose above the rest.

"Well, constable, what news?"

"He's in the lock-up, sir," was Mr. Sam Dodd's reply; "and there he'll be, safe and sound, till the crowner holds his quest."

"Who is in the lock-up?" asked Sir John, for the parties now present were not those who had been at the taking of Payne: *they* had flocked, one and all, to the "lock-up," crowd like, at the heels of the constable and his prisoner. And Sir John Seabury, having but just entered, had not heard of Mrs. Armstrong's suspicion.

"Him what did the murder, sir," was the constable's explanatory answer, who had reasoned himself to the conclusion, as rural constables were apt to do in those days, that, because some slight suspicion attached to Payne, he must inevitably have committed it. "And he never said a word," exulted Mr. Dodd, "but he held out his hands for the ancufts as if he knowed they'd fit. He only declared he weren't guilty, and walked along with his head up, like a lord, and not a bit o' shame about him, saying that the truth would come out sooner or later. It's a sight to see, gentlemen, the brass them murderers has, and many on 'em keeps it up till they's a-ridin to the drop."

"How was it brought home to him?—who is it?" reiterated the baronet.

"It's young Mr. Payne," answered the officer, wiping his face, and then throwing the handkerchief into the hat, which stood on the floor beside him.

"Mr. Payne!" repeated Sir John Seabury, in astonishment; whilst Jane, never for a moment believing the words, but startled into anger, stood forward, and spoke with trembling lips. "What are you talking about, constable? what do you mean?"

"Mean, miss! Why, it were young Mr. Payne what did the murder, and I have took him into custody."

"The constable says right," added Mrs. Armstrong. "There's not a doubt about it. He and Darnley were disputing here all last evening, and they left with ill-feeling between them. Who else can have done it?"

But she was interrupted by Miss Armstrong; and it should be explained that Jane, having just risen from the bed where they had placed her in the morning, had not until this moment known of the accusation against Payne. She turned to Sir John Seabury; she appealed to her father; she essayed to remonstrate with her mother; her anger and distress at length finding vent in hysterical words.

"Father! Sir John! there is some terrible mistake. Mother! how can you stand by and listen? I told you the murderer was a stranger—I told you so: what do they mean by accusing Ronald Payne?"

Jane might have held her tongue, for instilled suspicion is a serpent that gains quick and sure ground, and perhaps there was scarcely one around her who did not think it probable that Payne was the guilty man. They listened to Jane's reiterated account of the morning's scene she had been an ear-witness to; to her assertion that it was impossible Ronald Payne could have been the murderer; but they hinted how unlikely it was, that in her terror, she was capable of recognizing, or not recognizing voices; and she saw she was not fully believed.

She found herself, subsequently, she hardly knew how, in their best parlour—a handsome room and handsomely furnished—alone with Sir John Seabury. She had an indefinite idea afterwards, that in passing the door she had drawn him in. He stood there with his eyes fixed on Jane, waiting for her to speak.

"Oh, Sir John! Sir John!" she cried, clinging to his arm in the agitation of the moment as she might cling to that of a brother, "I see I am not believed: yet indeed I have told the truth. It was a stranger who murdered Mr. Darnley."

"Certainly the voice of one we are intimate with is not readily mistaken, even in moments of terror," was Sir John Seabury's reply.

"It was an ill voice, a wicked voice; a voice that, independently of any accessory circumstances, one could only suppose belonged to a

wicked man. But the language it used was awful : such that I had never imagined could be uttered."

"And it was a voice you did not recognize?"

"It was a voice I could not recognize," returned Jane, "for I had never until then heard it."

Sir John looked keenly at her. "Is this rumour correct that they have been now hinting at," he whispered—"you heard it as well as I—that there was an attachment between you and Ronald Payne? and that there was ill-feeling between him and Darnley in consequence?"

"I see even you do not believe me," cried Jane, bursting into tears. "There *is* an attachment between us : but do you think I would avow such attachment for a murderer? The man whom I heard commit the deed was a stranger," she continued earnestly ; "and Ronald Payne was not near the spot at the hour."

"There is truth in your face, Miss Armstrong," observed Sir John, gazing at her.

"And truth in my heart," she added.

And before he could prevent her, she had slipped towards the ground, and was kneeling on the carpet at the feet of Sir John.

"As truly as that I must one day answer before the bar of God," she said, clasping her hands together, "so have I spoken now : and according to my truth in this, may God deal then with me ! Sir John Seabury, do you believe me?"

"I do believe you, my dear young lady," he answered, the conviction of her honest truth forcing itself upon his mind. "And however this unfortunate business may turn out for Ronald Payne, in my mind he will be from henceforth an innocent and a wronged man."

"Can your influence not release him?" inquired Jane. "You are powerful."

"Impossible. I could do no more than yourself. He is in the hands of the law."

"But you can speak to his character at the coroner's inquest?" she rejoined. "You know how good it has always been."

Sir John kindly explained to her that all testimonials to character must be offered at the trial, should it be Payne's fate to be committed for one.

When further inquiries came to be instituted, it was found that Darnley had been roused from his slumbers, and called out of his house, about half an hour, perhaps less, before the murder was committed. The only person deposing to this fact was his housekeeper—a most respectable woman, who slept in the room over her master. She declared that she had been unable to sleep in the early part of the night, feeling nervous at the violence of the wind ; that towards morning she dropped asleep, and was awakened by a noise, and by some one shouting out her master's name. That she then heard her master open his

window, and speak with the person outside, whoever it was ; and that he almost immediately afterwards went downstairs, and out at the house-door.

"Who was it?" asked all the curious listeners. "And what did he want with Darnley?"

The housekeeper did not know. She thought the voice was that of a stranger ; at any rate it was one she did not recognize. And she could not say what he wanted, for she had not heard the words that passed : in fact, she was but half awake at the time, and had thought it was one of the farm servants.

The coroner's inquest was held, and the several facts already related were deposed to. Mrs. Armstrong's evidence told against Jane's for, the prisoner. No article belonging to the unfortunate James Darnley had been found, save a handkerchief, *and that was found in the pocket of Ronald Payne*. He accounted for it in this way. He left his own pocket-handkerchief, he said, a red silk one, by accident that night on the table at Mrs. Armstrong's—and this was proved to be correct ; that when he and Darnley got out, the wind was so boisterous they could not keep their hats on. Darnley tied his handkerchief over his. Payne would have done the same, but could not find it, so he had to hold his hat on with his hand. That when Darnley entered his house, he threw the handkerchief to his companion, to use it for the like purpose the remainder of his way, he having further to go than Darnley. And, finally, Payne asserted that he had put the handkerchief in his pocket upon getting up that morning, intending to return it to Darnley as soon as he saw him.

The handkerchief was produced in court. It was of white lawn, large and of fine texture, marked in full, "James Darnley."

"He was always a bit of a dandy, poor fellow," whispered the country rustics, scanning the white handkerchief : "especially when he went a-courting."

Ronald Payne, as one proof of his innocence, stated that he was in bed at the time the murder was committed. A man-servant of his, who slept on the same floor as himself, also deposed to this ; and said that a labourer came to the house with the news that a man had been found killed, before his master came down stairs. But upon being asked whether his master could not have left his bedroom and the house in the night, and have subsequently returned to it without his knowledge, he admitted such might have been the case ; though it was next to a "moral impossibility,"—such were his words—for it to have been done without his hearing.

But what was the verdict?—"Wilful Murder against some person or persons unknown ;" for the jury and the coroner did not find the evidence sufficiently strong to commit Payne for trial. So he left the court a discharged man, but *not*, as the frequent saying runs, without a stain

upon his character. Although the verdict, contrary to general expectation, was in his favour, the whole neighbourhood believed him guilty. And from that moment, so violent is popular opinion, whether for good or for ill, he was exposed to nearly all the penalties of a guilty man. A dog could scarcely have been worse treated than he was; and, so far as talking against him went, Mrs. Armstrong headed the malcontents.

II.

So matters went on till the month of February. In the quiet dusk of one of its evenings, Jane Armstrong crept away from her house, and, taking a direction opposite to that where the murder was committed, walked quickly till her father's orchard was in view. Crossing the stile of this, she turned to the right, and there stood Ronald Payne.

"This is kind of you, Jane," he said, as he seated her upon the stump of a felled tree, and placed himself beside her. "God bless you for this!"

"It is but little matter, Ronald, to be thanked for," she replied. "Perhaps it is not exactly what I ought to do, coming secretly to meet you here, but——"

"It is a great matter," he interrupted, bitterly. "I am now a proscribed man; a thing for boys to hoot at. It requires some courage, Jane, to meet a murderer."

"I *know* your innocence, Ronald," she answered, as, in all confiding affection, she leaned upon his bosom, while her tears fell fast. "Had you been tried—condemned—executed, I would still have testified unceasingly to your innocence."

"I sent for you here, Jane," he resumed, "to tell you my plans. I am about to leave this country for America. Perhaps I may there walk about without the brand upon my brow."

"Oh, Ronald!" she ejaculated, "is this your fortitude? Did you not promise me to bear this affliction with patience, and to hope for better days?"

"Jane, I did so promise you," replied the unhappy young man; "and if it were not for that promise, I should have gone long ago: but things get worse every day, and I can no longer bear it. I believe if I remained here I should go mad. See what a life mine is! I am buffeted—trampled down—spit upon—shunned—jeered—deserted by my fellow-creatures; not by one, but by all: save you, Jane, there is not a human being who will speak with me. I would not so goad another, were he even a known murderer, whilst I am but a suspected one. I have not deserved this treatment—God knows I have not!" And suddenly breaking off, he bent down his head, and, giving way to the misery that oppressed him, for some moments sobbed aloud like a child.

"Ronald, dearest Ronald," she entreated, "think better of this for my sake. Trust in——"

"It is useless, Jane, to urge me," he interrupted. "I cannot remain in England."

Again she tried to combat his resolution: it seemed useless. But, unwilling to give up the point, she wrung a promise from him that he would well reconsider the matter during the following night and day: and, agreeing to meet him on the same spot the next evening, she parted from him with his kisses warm on her lips.

"Where can Jane be?" exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong, calling out, and looking up and down the house in search of her. "Robert, do you know."

Mr. Armstrong knew nothing about it.

The lady went into the kitchen, where the two indoor servants were seated at their tea.

"Susan—Benjamin, do you know anything of Miss Jane?"

"She is up there in the orchard with young Mr. Payne, ma'am," interposed Ned, the carter's boy, who stood by.

"How do you know?" demanded Mrs. Armstrong, wrathfully.

"Because I brought her a message from him to go there. So I just trudged up a short while ago, and there I see 'em. He was a-kissin' of her or something o' that."

"My daughter with *him*!" cried Mrs. Armstrong, her face crimson, whilst Susan overbalanced her chair in her haste to administer a little wholesome correction to the bold-speaking boy. "My daughter with a murderer!"

"That's why I went up," chimed in the lad, dodging out of Susan's way. "I feared he might be for killin' Miss Jane as he killed t'other, so I thought I'd watch 'em a bit."

Away flew Mrs. Armstrong to her husband, representing the grievance with all the exaggeration of an angry woman. Loud, stinging denunciations from both greeted Jane upon her entrance, and she, miserable and heartbroken, could offer no resistance to the anger of her incensed parents. It was very seldom Mr. Armstrong gave way to passion; never with Jane; but he did that night: and she, terrified and sick at heart, promised compliance with his commands never to see Ronald Payne again.

Here was another blow for the ill-fated young man. Whether he had wavered or not, after his previous interview with Jane, must remain unknown, but he now determined to leave England, and without loss of time. He went to Sir John Seabury, and gave up the lease of his farm. It was said that Sir John urged him to stop and battle out the storm; but in vain. He disposed privately of his stock and furniture, and by the first week in March was on his way to Liverpool.

It was on the following Saturday that Jane Armstrong accompanied her father and mother to Worcester. She seemed as much like a person dead as alive; and Susan said, in confidence to a gossip, that young

Mr. Payne's untoward fate was breaking her heart. The city, in the afternoon, wore an aspect of gaiety and bustle far beyond that of the customary market-day, for the judges were expected in from Oxford to hold the assizes : a grand holiday then, and still a grand show for the Worcester people. Jane and her mother spent the day with some friends, whose residence was situated in the London-road, as it is called, the way by which the judges entered the city. It has been mentioned that the high sheriff for that year was Sir John Seabury ; and, about three o'clock, he went out with his procession to meet the judges, halting at the little village of Whittington until they should arrive.

It may have been an hour or more after its departure from the city that the sweet, melodious bells of the cathedral struck out upon the air, giving notice that the cavalcade had turned and was advancing ; and, in due time, a flourish of trumpets announced its approach. The heralds rode first, at a slow and stately pace, with their trumpets, preceding a double line of javelin men in the sumptuous liveries of the Seabury family, their javelins in rest, and their horses, handsomely caparisoned, pawing the ground. A chaise, thrown open, followed, containing the governor of the county gaol, his white wand raised in the air ; and then came the sheriff's carriage, an equipage of surpassing elegance, the Seabury arms shining forth on the panels, and its four stately steeds prancing and chafing at the deliberate pace to which they were restrained.

It contained only one of the judges, all imposing in his flowing wig and scarlet robes. The Oxford assizes not having terminated when he left, he had hastened on to open court at Worcester, leaving his learned brother to follow. Opposite to him sat Sir John Seabury, with his chaplain in his gown and bands : and as Jane stood with her mother and their friends at the open window, the eye of their affable young landlord caught hers, and he leaned forward and bowed : but the smile on his face was checked, for he too surely read the worn and breaking spirit betrayed by Jane's. Some personal friends of the sheriff followed the carriage on horseback ; and, closing the procession, rode a crowd of Sir John's well-mounted tenants, the portly person of Mr. Armstrong conspicuous in the midst. But when Mrs. Armstrong turned towards her daughter with an admiring remark on the pageantry, Jane was sobbing bitterly.

Mrs. and Miss Armstrong left their friend's house when tea was over, on their way to the inn used by Mr. Armstrong at the opposite end of the town. They were in High-Street, passing the Guildhall ; Jane walking dreamily forwards, and her mother gazing at the unusual groups scattered about it, though all signs of the recent cavalcade had faded away ; when master Samuel Dodd, the constable, met them. He stood still, and addressed Jane.

" I think we have got the right man at last, Miss Armstrong. I

suppose it will turn out, after all, that you were right about young Mr. Payne."

"What has happened?" faltered Jane.

"We have took a man, miss, on strong suspicions that he is the one what cooked Mr. Darnley. We have been upon the scent this week past. You must be in readiness, ladies, for you'll be wanted on the trial, and it will come on next Tuesday or Wednesday. You'll get your summonses on Monday morning."

"Good heart alive, constable!" cried the startled Mrs. Armstrong. "You don't mean to say that Ronald Payne was innocent!"

"Why, ma'am, that have got to be proved. For my part, I think matters would be best left as they is, and not rake 'em up again. He have been treated so very shameful if it should turn out that he warn't guilty."

It was even as the constable said. A man had been arrested and thrown into the county gaol at Worcester, charged with the wilful murder of James Darnley.

III.

LATE on Tuesday evening Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong, with their daughter, drove into Worcester, to be in readiness for the next day's trial. It was a dull, rainy evening, and Jane leaned back in the carriage, almost careless as to what the following day would bring forth, since Ronald Payne had gone away for ever.

At about five minutes past nine in the morning, the presiding judge took his seat on the bench. The crowded, noisy court was hushed to silence, the prisoner was brought in, and the trial began.

The chief fact against the accused was, that the pocket-book, with its contents, known to have been in Darnley's possession on the ill-fated morning, had been traced to the prisoner. The bank-notes he had changed away, and a silver pencil-case that was in it he had pledged. All this he did not deny; but he asserted that he had found the pocket-book hid in the hedge, close to the spot, when he had been prowling about there a few hours subsequent to the murder. It *might* be as he said; and the counsel chattered wisely to each other, saying there was no evidence to convict him.

The last witness called was Jane Armstrong; and her sensible, modest, and ladylike appearance prepossessed every one in her favour. She gave her testimony clearly and distinctly. The deadly struggle she had heard; the groans of the victim, and his shrieks of murder; the words uttered by the assailant; the blows which had been dealt, and the fall of the murdered man—all she separately deposed to. Still the crime was not brought home to the prisoner. Jane thought her testimony was over, and was waiting for her dismissal from the witness-box, when the counsel for the prosecution addressed her.

"Look around you, young lady : can you point out any one present as the murderer ? "

She looked attentively round the court, but as she had not *seen* the murderer on the dark morning, the effect was vain. But, though she felt it was fruitless, she once more gazed minutely and carefully at the sea of faces around her—at the prisoner's amongst the rest ; and turning again to the judge, she shook her head.

At this moment a voice was heard, rising harshly above all the murmur of the court. Jane's back was towards the speaker, and she did not know from whom it came, but the tones thrilled upon her ear with horror, for she recognized them instantaneously. They were addressed to the judge.

"My lord, she's going to swear away my life."

"THAT'S THE MAN !" uttered Jane, with the startling earnestness of truth. "I know him by his voice."

The prisoner—for he had been the speaker—quailed as he heard her, and an ashy paleness overspread his face. The judge gazed sternly, but somewhat mournfully, at him, and spoke words that are remembered in Worcester unto this day.

"Prisoner, *you have hanged yourself.*"

The trial proceeded to its close. A verdict of GUILTY was returned against the prisoner : and the judge, placing on his head the dread black cap, pronounced upon him the extreme sentence of the law.

Before he suffered, he confessed his guilt, with the full particulars attending it. It may be remembered, that on the stormy evening when the chief actors in this history were introduced to the reader, the unfortunate James Darnley spoke of having just returned from a neighbouring fair. At this fair, it seemed, he had entered a public-house, and finding there some farmers of his acquaintance, he sat down with them to drink a glass of ale. In the course of conversation he spoke of the stock, cattle, &c., he had just sold, and the sum he had received for it, the money being then—he himself gratuitously added—in his breeches-pocket. He mentioned also his intended journey to Worcester market the following day, and that there his business would be to buy.

The wretched man, afterwards his murderer, was present amongst various other strangers, which a fair is apt to collect together, and he formed the diabolical project of robbing him that night ; but by some means or other the intention was frustrated. How, was never clearly ascertained, but it was supposed through Darnley's leaving for home at an unusually early hour, that he might be in time to pay a visit to the house of Miss Armstrong. The villain, however, was not to be so baulked. Rightly judging that Darnley would not remove his money from his breeches-pocket, as he would require it at Worcester market the following day, he made his way to his victim's house in the early dark of the ensuing winter's morning, and knocked him up. A strange pro-

ceeding, the reader will say, for one with the intentions he held. Yes. There stood James Darnley shivering at his chamber window, suddenly roused from a sound sleep, by the knocking ; and there, underneath, stood one in the dark, whose form he was unable to distinguish ; but it seemed a friendly voice that spoke to him, and it told a plausible tale. That Darnley's cows had broken from their enclosure and were strolling away, trespassing, and that he would do well to rise and hasten to them.

With a few cordial thanks to the unknown warner, with a pithy anathema on his cows, Darnley thrust on his knee-breeches—the breeches, as his destroyer had foreseen—and his farm jacket : went down stairs, and departed hastily on his errand. The reader need be told no more.

This was the substance of his confession ; and on the appointed day he was placed in the cart to be drawn to execution. At that period, the gallows consecrated to Worcester criminals was erected on Red-hill ; a part of the London-road, situated about midway between Worcester and Whittington ; and here he was executed. An exhibition of the sort generally attracts its spectators, but such an immense assemblage has rarely been collected in Worcester, whether before or since, as was gathered together to witness the show on the day of his execution.

In proportion as the tide had turned against Ronald Payne, so did it now set in for him. The neighbourhood, one and all, took shame to themselves for their conduct to an innocent man, and it was astonishing to observe how quick they were in declaring that they must have been fools to suspect a kind-hearted, honourable man could be guilty of murder. Mrs. Armstrong's self-reproaches were keen : she was a just woman : and she knew that she had treated him with bitter harshness. Sir John Seabury, however, did not waste words in condolence and reproaches, as did the others : he dispatched a trusty messenger to Liverpool, in the hope of catching Payne before he embarked for a foreign land ; and, as vessels in those times did not start every day, as steamers do in these, he was successful.

IV.

It was a beautiful afternoon in the middle of March. The villagers were decked out as for a holiday ; garlands and festoons denoted that there was some unusual cause for rejoicing ; and the higher class of farmers and their wives were grouped together, conversing cheerfully. Jane Armstrong stood by her mother, a happy flush upon her pleasing countenance. It was the hour of the expected return of Ronald Payne, and a rustic band of music had gone forth to meet the stage-coach.

Everybody was talking, nobody listening ; the buzz of expectation rose louder and louder ; and soon the band was heard returning, half of it blowing away at "See the Conquering Hero comes," the other half

(not having been able to agree amongst themselves) drumming and whistling "God save the King." Before the audience had time to comment on the novel effect of this new music, horses' heads were seen in the distance, and not the heavy coach, as had been expected, but the open barouche of Sir John Seabury came in sight, containing himself and Ronald Payne.

Ronald was nearly hugged to death. Words of apology and congratulation, of excuse and good-will, of repentance and joy, were poured into his ear by all, save Jane; and she stood away, the uncontrollable tears coursing down her face. It was plain, in a moment, that he bore no malice to any of them: his brow was as frank as ever, his eye as merry, his hands as open to clasp theirs. He was the same old Ronald Payne of months ago.

"Ronald Payne!" exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong, standing a little before the rest: "I was the first to accuse you; I was the foremost to rail at and shun you; let me be the most eager to express my painful regret, and so far—which is all I can do—make reparation. For the future, you shall not have a more sincere friend than myself."

"And allow me, Mr. Payne, to be the second to speak," added Sir John: "although I have no apology to make, for I never believed you guilty, as you know; but all these good people did, and it is useless, you are aware, to run against a stream. As some recompense for what you have suffered, I hereby offer you a lease of the farm and lands rented by the unfortunate James Darnley. It is the best vacant farm on my estate. And—a word yet: should you not have sufficient ready money to stock it, I will be your banker."

Ronald Payne grasped in silence the offered hand of his landlord. His heart was too full to speak; but a hum of gratification from those around told that the generosity was appreciated.

"But, Mrs. Armstrong," continued Sir John, a merry smile upon his countenance; "is there no other recompense you can offer him?"

Jane was now standing amongst them, by Ronald's side, though not a word had yet passed between them. His eyes fondly sought hers at the last words, but her glowing countenance was alike turned from him and from Sir John Seabury.

"Ay, by all that's right and just, there is, Sir John!" burst forth good Farmer Armstrong. "He deserves her, and he shall have her; and if my wife still says no, why I don't think she is any wife of mine."

Sir John glanced at Mrs. Armstrong, waiting no doubt for her lips to form themselves into the negative; but they formed themselves into nothing, save an approving smile cast towards Ronald Payne.

"And with many thanks, grateful thanks—which I am sure *he* feels—for your generous offer of being his banker, Sir John," continued Mr. Armstrong, "you must give me leave to say that it will not now be needed. My daughter does not go to her husband portionless."

"You must let me have notice of the time, Miss Armstrong," whispered Sir John, as he leaned forward and took her hand; "for I have made up my mind to dance at your wedding."

But the secret was not confined to Sir John Seabury. The crowd had comprehended it now; and suddenly, as with one universal voice, the air was rent with shouts. "Long live Ronald Payne and his fair wife when he shall win her! Long life and happiness to Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Payne!"



HOPE ON.

HOPE on, tired heart, hope on!
 Though dark thy lot,
 Nor one bright spot
 To cheer thy lonely way.
 Let not thy courage fail thee;
 When doubts and fears assail thee,
 Hope on!

There shines a guiding star above: look up and find its ray.

Hope on, brave heart, hope on!
 Friends may deceive,
 And thou may'st grieve
 And mourn affection's loss.
 But do not yet despair, love;
 True friends, like pearls, are rare, love;
 Hope on!

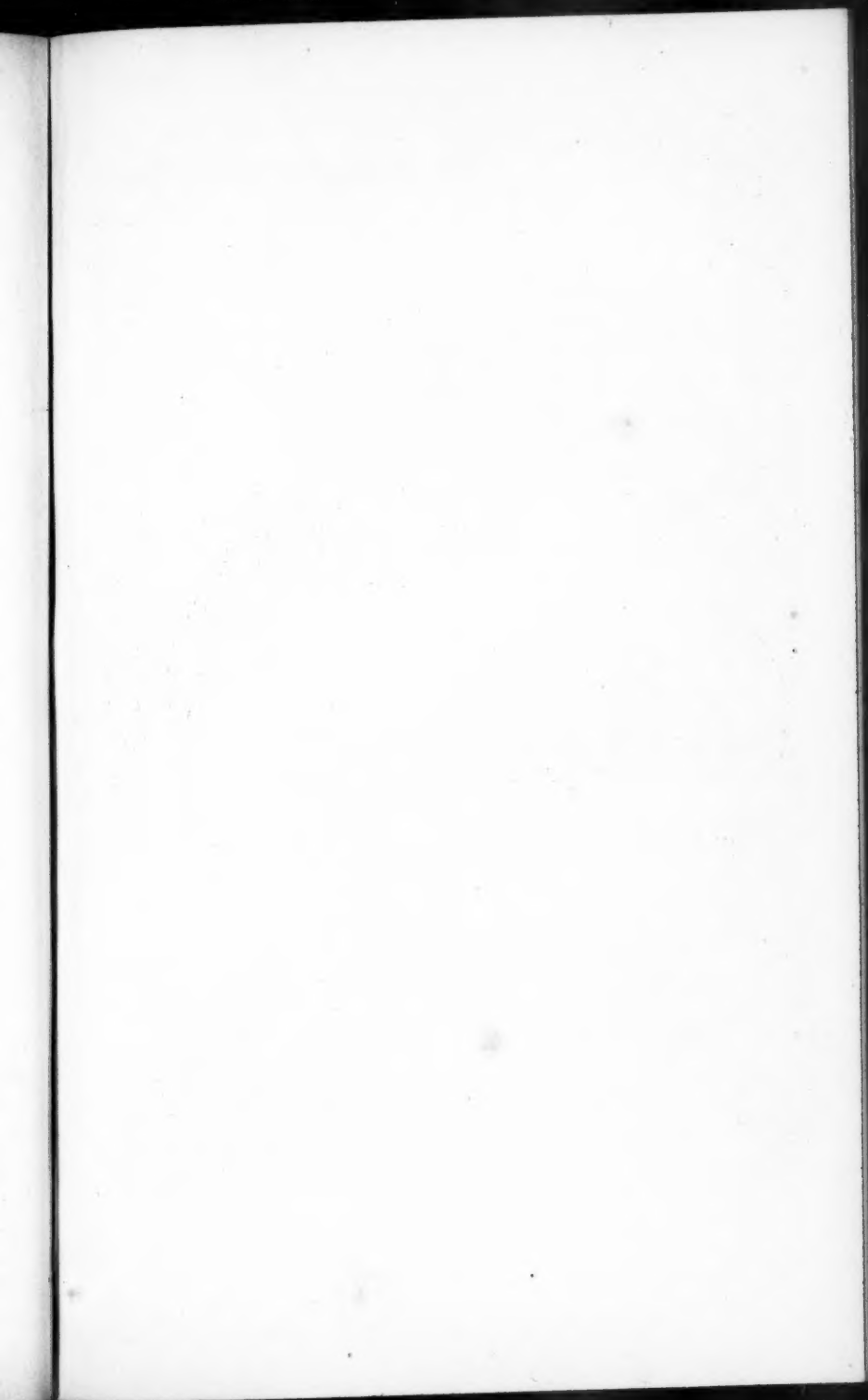
And through the growing darkness nobly, bravely bear thy cross.

Hope on, true heart, hope on!
 Let friends depart,
 One faithful heart
 Is fixed and constant still.
 Then let this one thought cheer thee;
 In spirit I am near thee:
 Hope on!

Thy star is watching o'er thee, to guard thee from all ill.

Hope on, sweet heart, hope on!
 By night and day,
 For thee I pray,
 Till all thy toil be past.
 These days so dark and drear, love,
 Are passing—never fear, love:
 Hope on!

The star of love prevails o'er all; 'twill bring thee rest at last.





M. ELLEN EDWARDS.

IN THE CHAMPS ELYSEES.

EDMUND EVANS.